RITSCHLIANISM

JOHN KENNETH MOZLEY, M.A.

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AN ESSAY

By JOHN KENNETH MOZLEY, M.A.

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TO

WILHELM HERRMANN

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MARBURG

IN GRATITUDE

FOR MUCH PERSONAL KINDNESS RECEIVED

AND

IN RECOGNITION OF ALL THAT HE HAS DONE

TO ESTABLISH THE TRUE MEANING AND

SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

PREFACE

THE following essay divided the Norrisian Prize at Cambridge for the year 1908. The terms under which the prize is given necessitate publication, which must be my excuse for adding one more to the studies of the Ritschlian Theology which have appeared in recent years. So much has already been written on the subject that it is almost impossible for a new writer to say anything very fresh. I can only hope that I may be able to direct attention rather more fully than appears to have been the case in the past, to the importance which the Ritschlian School has always attached to a true conception of the nature of Christian Faith.

My general standpoint will, I trust, become clear in the course of the essay. No student of Ritschlianism can fail to acknowledge the great debt he owes to the work of Dr. Orr and Dr. Garvie. If, at times, I have felt myself bound to differ somewhat considerably from Dr. Orr's judgments, I hope I have not said anything which could be construed as a lack of respect for one who, in many ways, has served with such learning and ability the cause of Christian Theology. To Dr. Garvie, over and above his book, I am indebted for useful hints given in the course of conversation. Others to whom I owe much for valuable suggestions are my father, and Mr. H. G. Wood, Fellow of Jesus College,

Cambridge. The latter deserves my especial gratitude for his work of reading through the essay before it passed into the printers' hands, and for the insight and sympathy of his criticisms. The notes, in particular, owe very much to him.

I would say one last word as a member and clergyman of the Church of England. It is noticeable how much of the best work on Ritschlianism has been done by members of the non-Episcopal churches. It is much to be desired that at a time when we hear much of theological reconstruction the Church of England should be willing to learn even from quarters from which we have, perhaps not altogether unnaturally, come to expect undermining rather than strengthening of the Christian faith. A confessional Church, like the Church of England, is especially inclined to rest content with her own position, and look askance at those who, starting from a different point, cannot find rest for their souls in the formulated orthodoxy of the past. But we have much to learn from the theologians of Germany, from their courage, sincerity, and thoroughness. The Christian attitude may be theirs, even though it does not go on to express and justify itself by the adoption of the intellectual apparatus which past ages have bequeathed to us. I shall be content if the following pages lead any to, I will not say agreement with what a group of German theologians has done, but sympathy with what its members have tried to do.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The Nineteenth Century was a period of the greatest philosophical and theological activity in Germany. It was ushered in by the writings of the four great idealist philosophers, Kant, Schelling, Fichte and Hegel, who, though primarily metaphysicians, possessed the deepest interest in the problems of theology, and exerted a wide influence upon its development. German theology was indeed shaken out of the preciseness and placidity which had naturally resulted from the rigidity of Lutheran orthodoxy. For the era of the speculations of the philosophers was also the era of the rise of the Higher Criticism. Thus, while Christian doctrine was being resolved into symbolism, the Bible, on which all Christian doctrine must ultimately depend, was being subjected to a criticism which was the more ruthless because ignorant of the limits of its power, ignorant also of the extreme care necessary if its conclusions were to stand.

Of the idealist philosophers referred to above, Kant and Hegel were unquestionably the most influential, and those theologians who broke away at all from confessional orthodoxy, and attempted to reconcile the Christian faith with modern ideas, were indebted to

the one or the other. The tendency of Kant and his followers was in the direction of an ethical rationalism, while from Hegelianism proceeded a speculative and mystical rationalism. But of the two it was Hegel who especially dominated the liberalising theology of the first half of the century. He was obscurer than Kant and less obviously opposed to the conclusions of orthodoxy, while the Romanticist conception of the Universe which he expounded was championed independently of his theories by Schleiermacher, a thinker and theologian of the very first order ; who, without founding what can exactly be called a School, impressed himself immensely upon his age. Entirely convinced of the pre-eminence and finality of Christianity, he devoted himself to the defence of religion against rationalism. But, since in his view religion was essentially a matter of feeling, and the unity at which it aimed romantic and artistic rather than moral, he tended towards a mystical pantheism, towards a subordination of the historic Gospel to those eternal ideas, of which it was but the most perfect temporal symbol.

Hegelianism touched the high-water mark of its influence upon Christianity in the rapid rise to eminence of the Tübingen School. The Hegelian philosophy of history was applied by Strauss, and more explicitly by Baur, to the investigation of the facts of the Gospels and to the history of the early Church. The results were most revolutionary, but were widely accepted. The extreme right wing in the Lutheran Church of course stood firm, and there were mediating theologians like Dorner and the Danish Martensen who, without rivalling Hengstenberg in his unbending orthodoxy, refused to worship at the new shrine. But

the brilliance of the theologians of Tübingen carried, at first, almost all before it, and, naturally, the destructive criticism of the School had more influence than the reconstruction of history in accordance with Hegelian principles which Baur attempted. The general effect was to transform Christianity. The trustworthiness of the Gospels was entirely destroyed, the figure of the Saviour obscured : one of the few things we could be sure of was that miracles did not happen. The history of the early Church was practically rewritten, and Early Catholicism made the outcome of a reconciliation between the Petrine and Pauline parties. Dr. Pusey was justified in his complaint that all this might be a true view of Christianity, but most certainly it was a new one. It need hardly be said that the leaders of the School had not the smallest intention of undermining Christianity : that Christianity was undermined shows that any attempt to harmonise the Christian religion with the needs of the Hegelian dialectic and the Hegelian philosophy could only end disastrously, as Strauss finally came to recognise. The ultimate failure of the Tübingen School, the complete breakdown of the synthesis they had constructed, sounded the knell of Hegelianised Christianity.

But it was not merely by the weight of its own inherent weaknesses that the Tübingen position fell. In 1850 there appeared a work by a young adherent of the School, Albrecht Ritschl, on *The Origin of the Old Catholic Church*. It was not slavish in its acceptance of the Tübingen positions ; yet there could be no doubt of its general support. A second edition of this work came out in 1857, almost entirely rewritten. This time, instead of being a support, it was the most

formidable and effective criticism of the main positions of Baur and his followers that had appeared. Indeed, it may fairly be said that it was a deathblow to many of the leading positions of the Tübingen School. Christianity was saved from degenerating, or, rather, from being tortured into an historical illustration of Hegelian principles. The author of the criticism, with whose theology we are to deal in the present work, rose to be the most eminent and influential German theologian since Schleiermacher, the constructor of a theology which, in complete opposition to speculative liberalism, laid all its stress on the facts of history, which were no longer forcibly compelled to assume the form most calculated to constitute them fit vehicles for Hegelian ideas. Above all else, theology was brought back to see that Jesus Christ is important as a Person, not merely as an illustration of a principle. And Ritschl was able so to pass on his spirit to his followers that he has rightly been spoken of as the founder of a School, which, up till quite recently, was without question the dominant theological school in Germany. Even now, though its supremacy has been threatened by the growth of the so-called Religious-Historical School, its influence is by no means spent.

Up till a comparatively short time ago but little account was taken in England of Ritschl and his doctrines. As a people we have many faults, but scarcely that of the ancient Athenians, anxiety ‘ either to hear or to tell some new thing.’ However, the labours of distinguished scholars like Dr. Orr and Dr. Garvie have introduced Ritschl, from their different standpoints, to the British theological public. The translations of the works of members of the School,

who are, as a rule, considerably more readable than the Master himself, have further helped to an understanding of the principles and positions of those who are in more or less close sympathy with Ritschlianism. The growing interest felt in this theology is reflected in the attention devoted to it by Professor Inge and Dr. Rashdall in recent lectures in Cambridge.

Three main reasons have made it difficult for Ritschlianism to receive a favourable hearing in England, apart altogether from particular defects in the theological method and system presented. One reason is quite general ; one has special reference to the Church of England ; one applies more particularly to the great Nonconformist bodies. To take the general reason first, Ritschl was a German. Now there has always been a tendency in England to distrust German theology and theologians, a tendency to look upon it as anti-Christian in purpose as well as effect. But even if the objections to his nationality could have been surmounted, Ritschl was not at all likely to appeal to theologians of the Church of England. It was known that his method of treating Christian doctrine, if not his results, was revolutionary, and a confessional Church favours revolutionary methods least of all when they touch doctrine. A Church which adheres firmly to its own creeds cannot be expected to look with any natural friendliness on a thinker who is inclined to neglect creeds altogether. Finally, up to a short time ago, the Higher Criticism found it even more difficult to make any way in the English Free Churches than in the Church of England. The authority of the Bible appeared all-in-all to the former, and incompatible with those conclusions which most

critics were inclined to draw. The fact that Ritschl, though by no means an extreme critic, held very different ideas on Biblical authority and inspiration from those generally current in the theological circles of English Protestant Nonconformity was likely to prejudice his cause. For, by refusing to use the Bible in the traditional way, he seemed to be playing into the hands of the supporters of Church authority.

But a change has come; not only are the more moderate results of the higher criticism very generally accepted, but there is without doubt a feeling, even among theologians of unquestioned orthodoxy, that there are defects in the form in which Christian doctrine, especially with regard to the Person of Christ and His Divinity, has been constructed. So essentially conservative a theologian as Professor Denney[1] has given expression to this in his *Studies in Theology*, in which he says that the formula of the Two Natures does not adequately represent the effect Christ produces upon us, does not show Him sufficiently to be an unity. More recently, Dr. Garvie in his *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus*, Dr. Oswald Dykes in a series of articles in the *Expository Times*, and Dr. J. G. Simpson in his *Fact and Faith* have all let it appear that they are not satisfied with the form which the doctrine of the Godhead of Christ has assumed. Hence an atmosphere has been and is being created in which Ritschl is much more likely than formerly to obtain at least a fair hearing. The necessity of acknowledging those results of criticism which are not likely to be disturbed, and of showing that these results do not in any way impair the truth of Christianity, is increasingly viewed as a

[1] See Note A.

duty. But to make it clear that the Christian religion is not destroyed by Biblical criticism is just one of those things which Ritschl set himself to do. It is true that he is not primarily an apologist, but a very strong apologetic interest runs through his work, shown especially in his anxiety to make theology independent of science and metaphysics, and to leave it free to justify itself on its own merits and in its own way. Ritschl's followers have exhibited the same keen desire to prove that the truth of Christianity cannot be affected by critical conclusions, while at the same time they have avoided the mistake of representing Christianity as a religion of ideas rather than of historical facts. Harnack's pamphlet, *Christianity and History*, is extremely valuable in this connection, the more so as coming from one of the greatest living historical critics.

A very short account of Ritschl's life may now be given. He was born in 1822, and went to the University of Bonn in 1839, where he studied under Nitzsch. In 1841 he passed on to Halle, where the spell of Hegelianism fell upon him, and Tholuck and Julius Müller influenced him. In 1843 he took the degree of Ph.D. The next theologian with whom he came into contact was Rothe at Heidelberg, but his interest at that time was not in the mystical exposition of doctrine, with which Rothe's name is associated, but in those historical studies which the leaders of the Tübingen School were carrying on. He came into immediate touch with Baur at Tübingen in 1845, and in 1846 published a work written under the influence of the Tübingen view of history on *The Gospel of Marcion and the Canonical Gospel of Luke.*

In 1846 he left Tübingen and returned to Bonn, where he began work as a *privat docent*. He still adhered broadly to the Tübingen positions, and in 1850 brought out the work on the Old Catholic Church to which reference has already been made. In 1852 he was made Extraordinary Professor, and in 1859, two years after his complete rupture with Baur and his School, Ordinary Professor. He was now beginning to develop his own theology, to which a great impetus was given by his association with Lotze at Göttingen, where he went as Professor in 1864, and where he passed the rest of his life till 1889. In 1870 appeared the first volume of his *Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, containing an account of the historical development of the doctrine; this was followed four years later by the second volume, in which the Biblical conceptions were closely examined, and the third volume, which presented his own system. The smaller work, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, was published in 1875, while the three volumes of his *History of Pietism* were spread over the years from 1880 to 1886. In 1881 he defended himself against various attacks in a pamphlet on *Theology and Metaphysics*, and in 1888 the third revised edition of his great constructive work appeared. All this time his influence was increasing, and thinkers of note were attaching themselves to him, while, on the other hand, severe criticisms were passed upon his doctrine both from the conservative and the advanced liberal sides. Yet, despite these, he won a position which no German theologian had held since Schleiermacher, and when he died in 1889 he left behind him a number of followers ready and able to expound and defend his principles,

if not all his conclusions. Dr. Orr[1] has well brought out the two main features of the earlier part of his life —the receptivity of his mind, and his ability to maintain a strong and independent personality amid all the various influences which from time to time surrounded him. The extent to which he was indebted to other thinkers is displayed by M. Schoen in his work on *Les Sources historiques de la Théologie de Ritschl*, in which justice is also done to Ritschl's power of forming syntheses ; at the same time we may doubt whether Ritschl was not really more original than M. Schoen allows.

Ritschl is not an easy theologian to classify ; but, taking into account the German theological movements of the last century, we should be nearest the truth if we spoke of him as a 'mediating' theologian. He was out of sympathy with Conservatives like Luthardt and Frank, and Liberals like Pfleiderer and Lipsius. His essential difference from these latter two lies in this, that whereas they wished to reconcile Christianity with modern thought, and so were in line with the main Hegelian tradition, Ritschl desired to show that Christianity was independent of the modern movements of thought, and could watch them with equanimity. But if Rothe and Dorner are, as is often the case, taken as types of the mediating theologians, it must be admitted that Ritschl can with difficulty obtain a place in the same category. Rothe and Dorner were essentially apologists, Rothe in the interests of a speculative mysticism, Dorner in those of orthodox confessionalism But Ritschl, as we have said above, was not primarily an apologist, and he can

[1] Orr, *Ritschlianism, Critical and Expository Lectures*, pp. 34, 35.

be ascribed to the mediating school only because of his distance from ' positives ' and ' liberals ' alike.

The explanation of this difficulty of classification is to be found in his own claim to represent and develop the true principles of the Protestant Reformation, principles which, ever since Melanchthon had led the way in the construction of a Protestant scholasticism, had become more and more obscured. But, for Ritschl, adherence to true Reformation principles entailed necessarily strenuous opposition, not only to Roman Catholicism, but also to orthodox Protestantism and theological liberalism, both of which had turned their backs on those principles in matters of vital importance, especially in the question of the meaning of faith. One of the things which makes it so hard for an Englishman to understand Ritschl, is the necessity of appreciating his relation to the various movements of German theology : he cannot be understood at all unless proper weight is attached to his environment, and the connection of that environment with the purpose of his writings. In his great constructive work on *Justification and Reconciliation* there are often minute investigations into the doctrines of little-known Lutheran and Reformed divines. But such investigations are entirely necessary for Ritschl's object, which is to exhibit the development of Protestant theology, discover the cause and nature of its deflexion from the truest thought of the Reformers, and so work for a remedy. This return to the vital thoughts and religion of the Reformation is one of the chief characteristics of the School. Ritschl's followers are not united to him and to one another by a precise acceptance of his detailed system : what does unite

them is the possession of common principles and common methods. If we remember this, we shall see that at present it is impossible to say how far Ritschl's influence will really prevail. A much longer time must pass before we can judge of that. Ritschl's place in theology will not depend on how far his particular conclusions are adopted, but on how far the principles, the presuppositions, and the method, which lie behind his constructive work and are responsible for it, are adequate to the work of the constructive theologians of the future.

Now in what spirit should we come to a consideration of the Ritschlian theology? When Dr. Garvie pleaded for sympathetic treatment, Dr. Orr replied that 'sympathy may require to give way to a sense of its very serious defects, and it may become a duty to speak very plainly concerning them.'[1] And if the sympathy for which Dr. Garvie pleaded were merely of a sentimental kind, the natural good-will extended to those who are strangers to us in the house of theology, Dr. Orr's answer would win our assent. But this sympathy is not of a sentimental nature; it is founded —and Dr. Garvie asserts that it is founded—on the fact that the Ritschlians have realised the existence of a situation, which we must also come to realise, if we do not yet. However serious Ritschl's blunders may be, however obvious his defects, he has at least attempted, in the face of a strong reaction of a considerable section of present-day thought from Christianity, to supply what was needed. It cannot be said that the Christian Church as a whole has understood the meaning of the new intellectual situation.

[1] Orr, *Ritschlianism, Critical and Expository Essays*, p. 80.

But if the vague talk in which we too often indulge concerning religious difficulties, as though they were a number of detached ideas without any bond of units, were to give way to a thorough appreciation of the present position, we should at once prize Ritschl's fearless honesty more highly, and also treat his failures more justly and more mercifully.

No attempt is made in the succeeding chapters to deal with all those theologians who follow Ritschl more or less closely. As the movement gets further away from the founder of the School, it necessarily broadens out in various directions, and, with the rise of other theological problems than those to which Ritschl devoted most of his attention, it becomes more and more difficult to trace his direct influence. Herrmann of Marburg, and Kaftan of Berlin, and—to a much less extent—Harnack,[1] form the direct line of descent of Ritschl's ideas, and of these a good deal has been said. But they have modified many of Ritschl's positions, or laid the greatest emphasis on other facts than those to which he attached most importance; and the younger men, though greatly influenced by Ritschl's thought, have not tried to make his conclusions their own. Ritschl was a great systematic theologian, and the unrest of the age does not favour so vast a work of construction as Ritschl carried out. Dogma is not, on the whole, popular, and Ritschl was anything but undogmatic. We cannot, therefore, judge of the permanence of Ritschl's work by the extent to which his results have been accepted. We shall not speak with Professor Swing of his 'world-transforming views.' But if he has brought a new

[1] See Note B.

spirit into theology, alive to the nature and urgency of its problems, a spirit of some 'divine discontent' with those who have been no true teachers, but have lulled the Christian people into a dangerous repose, this in itself is a gift of the utmost value to the Christian Church.

We must pass now to a consideration of the main features of the Ritschlian Theology, and, first of all, to see how the School conceives of the relation of theology to philosophy, by philosophy being understood that abstract metaphysic which many of its champions would set up as dominant and regulative for every sphere of thought.

CHAPTER II

THE RITSCHLIAN ATTITUDE TO PHILOSOPHY

THERE are few subjects more perplexing to the student of Ritschl than his philosophy, and in particular his theory of knowledge. One of the first things he learns in acquainting himself with the thoughts and writings of this theologian is his profound sense of the harm that has come to Christianity through its alliances with philosophies quite alien in character from itself, and his general distrust of all metaphysical approaches to the knowledge of God. And yet Ritschl's own system appears to be largely dependent on an epistemology which is derived from two philosophers, Kant and Lotze, and which he has not succeeded in making very clear or convincing. It is true that in one place he asserts that Christianity is neutral as regards all theories of knowledge,[1] but this assertion loses most of its force when the earlier passage in the same treatise is recalled, in which he declares that every theologian as a scientific man must work in accordance with some definite theory of knowledge,[2] a declaration which, if it is to be taken seriously, implies that any particular theology will attain to truth in proportion as its fundamental epistemology is true.

[1] *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 46. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

But though the importance Ritschl attached to his own theory—an importance which stands out the more clearly in view of his highly critical comments on those who dissented from it—may properly lead us to feel that Ritschl's severe strictures on all speculative metaphysics, as distinct from any particular metaphysical system, are not warranted by his own practice, yet it is not quite fair to say with Professor Orr that 'Ritschlianism through its avowed dependence on a theory of knowledge is controlled at every point by metaphysics,' or with Frank, whom Dr. Orr quotes with evident approval, that 'through this loop-hole the whole of philosophy is drawn back into theology.'[1] A theory of knowledge is not a metaphysic, even though Dr. Garvie is right in saying that Ritschl identified the two; and whereas no thinker can work at all without some conception of the relation of knowledge to reality, it is by no means necessary that every thinker or theologian should have a metaphysic properly so called. Ritschl uses his epistemology to clear the ground for the development of his own positive and unquestionably unmetaphysical system, not to construct a metaphysic of his own. There can be no guarantee that a world-view obtained through the use of metaphysical categories will be similar to, much less the same as, that derived from the Christian revelation, and the attempt to force the two into an unnatural unity may lead to the disappearance of what is distinctively Christian. This was the result of the Hegelian movement, a good English instance of which can be seen in the last chapter of Dr. Edward Caird's *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*. It

[1] Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith*, p. 237.

was Ritschl's earnest wish to find such a theory of knowledge as would justify him in keeping Christianity and speculative metaphysics apart, and the presence of speculation in his own theology does not convict him of failure. Any process of reasoning that is other than a series of purely logical deductions must contain speculative elements, but we mean something very different from this when we speak of a metaphysical system. The mere fact that, *e.g.*, Ritschl deduces the Kingdom of God from God's love as its necessary object does not justify us in describing him as a metaphysician. Neither St. Paul nor St. John abstained from speculation, but of genuine metaphysics in either of them there is hardly a trace. Ritschl's epistemology is not profound, and we shall see that it really cramped his theology in certain respects instead of freeing it. But if we use the word 'metaphysical' exactly, we must allow that the whole bias of his theory of knowledge is anti-metaphysical. There is therefore no inconsistency in the insistence on a regulative theory of knowledge by one who would allow no place to metaphysics in building up correct presentations of Christian truth.

Ritschl's epistemology is constructed in opposition to Plato and Kant, and in dependence on Lotze. The Platonic theory of ideas seemed to him to imply a separation between the thing at rest, the *Ding an sich*, and its qualities and activities in phenomena, which kept the mind detached from reality and led to useless because insoluble speculations on the nature or essence of the thing. With Kant's agnostic attitude towards the thing itself Ritschl wholly agreed, but whereas Kant found no reality in those phenomena to which

alone our understanding is directed, Ritschl argued 'that the world of phenomena can be posited as the object of knowledge, only if in them something real—to wit, the thing—appears to us or is the cause of our sensation and perception.'[1] Professor Orr is therefore not justified in his statement that 'To say, as Kant does, that the "real thing" is unknowable in itself, and with Ritschl that it is known only in the phenomenon (*i.e.* its subjective effect), are two expressions for the same thing.'[2] This would only be the case if Ritschl held that the phenomena in which the thing appears were mere subjective impressions. Ritschl follows Kant in refusing to form any conception of the thing apart from phenomena, but in his view of the phenomena unmistakably differs from him. It is Lotze's epistemology which gains Ritschl's allegiance. Lotze holds that 'in the phenomena which in a definite space exhibit changes to a limited extent and in a determinate order we cognise the thing as the cause of its qualities operating upon us, as the end which these serve as means, as the law of their constant changes.'[3]

But though there is a close verbal resemblance between Lotze's doctrine and that of Ritschl, there are in reality important differences which account for the opinions of many critics that it would be more accurate to describe Ritschl as Neo-Kantian in his theory of knowledge than as a follower of Lotze. We have seen that Ritschl was anxious to avoid Kant's view in which phenomena become mere illusions, and therefore made the presence of the thing, the ultimate reality, in pheno-

[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, p. 19. (English Translation.)
[2] Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, etc., p. 39.
[3] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 20-21. (E. T.)

mena the centre of his position. Lotze, despite his belief in the action of the thing in phenomena, attached no real existence to the phenomena themselves. These impressions are indeed caused by the action of things upon us, but we do not therefore gain any true picture of things in themselves, and we must beware of attributing to objects qualities which exist only in our imaginations. Lotze accordingly falls back upon reason to tell us something of objective reality, and through his belief that spirit, not matter, is the essence of the world, supplements his epistemology by a metaphysic, and saves himself from falling into pure subjective idealism by his doctrine of spiritual existences as causes of phenomena which are symbols, not images of reality. Neither his scepticism when he affirms the 'unavoidable and thorough-going subjectivity of our cognition,'[1] nor his positive conception of infinite spiritual beings behind phenomena, finds an echo in Ritschl.

Ritschl's failure either to think out an adequate metaphysic for himself, or thoroughly to understand the theory of knowledge which Lotze had formed, and which he, as he thought, took over in its essential points, accounts for the varying judgments formed of his philosophy by his interpreters. There must indeed be confusion in a thinker to whom both subjective idealism and naïve realism have been attributed with some justification! Yet it is only by exaggerating his affinity to Kant that he can be described as an idealist. His approval of that philosopher's position that the thing itself is unknowable, loses its appearance of an advance towards idealism

[1] Lotze, *Outlines of Metaphysics*, p. 143. (E. T.)

when we remember how closely he connects the thing with phenomena, and so looks for reality in the world of sense rather than in the world of ideas. 'We know the subject,' he writes, 'only in its predicates. If we could leave these out of our thought or forget them, the thing also, which we have learned to know under these signs, would fall out of our knowledge.'[1] All through his theology we shall find this same tendency to look for the thing in its signs and effects, and not to go beyond them. What is unfortunate in Ritschl is not any inclination on his part to throw doubt on the reality of things, but the obvious inability of his theory to apply to all cases. For cases exist in which reality is not attained to by a mere consideration of its signs, and here Ritschl is unable to help us. It is then that he seems at one with the critical idealism which can tell us nothing of the nature of ultimate reality.

Ritschl's own position has been well described by Dr. Garvie as 'vulgar realism,'[2] and is essentially the same as that of ordinary non-philosophical persons. And as these latter never set themselves to solve the problem of the relations of knowledge and existence because no such problem appears on their horizon, so is it with Ritschl. It is clear that knowledge, in dealing with the phenomena of sense-perceptions, has material to work on which is denied it if it applies itself to transcendental realities—granting that these latter exist—and it is therefore natural to invest these phenomena with the fullest reality attainable by us here. Idealists, from Plato to Mr. Bradley, have conceived of different degrees of reality rising away from sense-

[1] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 37.
[2] Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 45.

impressions which are not the objects of knowledge but only of opinion. Ritschl's method is much more akin to that of modern science than to that of metaphysic: indeed, as we have seen, he has not, properly speaking, a metaphysic at all. His attention is confined to an analysis of individual particular existences, and depreciation of these in the interests of universal formless existence, to which the name of 'reality' or 'God' is quite arbitrarily attached, is simply the result of false metaphysics or Neo-platonic mysticism.[1]

But any theory of knowledge, whether true or false, necessarily implies an unity in the person who knows, and we must now turn our attention from the facts of knowledge, analysed and arranged by the subject, to that subject. There are passages in Ritschl, eagerly seized upon by his critics, which appear to merge the soul so entirely in its functions that the unity of the self is endangered, and, among other results, its immortality becomes highly precarious. For immortality is contingent on the self's independence of those functions which it performs on the present plane of existence, and its consequent capacity for being abstracted from them. Ritschl writes, 'We know nothing of a self-existence of the soul, of a self-enclosed life of the spirit above or behind those functions in which it is active, living, and present to itself as a being of special worth. It is a contradiction when the faculties of the soul are supposed to exercise their effects, and at the same time to constitute in repose the proper being of the soul thus cut off from its functions.'[2] And in another place he says, 'Of my metaphysical being

[1] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, pp. 27, 28.
[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 21. (E. T.)

(my real actual being, according to Luthardt) I know nothing and experience nothing ; and so I cannot direct myself by it. And Luthardt cannot teach me about it, since he also is quite ignorant of it.'[1] Of these positions Pfleiderer declares that ' they make the unity of the ego illusion, and reality is to be sought only in the multiplicity of its functions,' and asks how in that case we are to explain the actual consciousness of personal identity, the continuity of consciousness, and the fact of memory. The possibility of unity in moral character, and the conception of immortality, are jeopardised.[2]

There can be no question that Ritschl in his intense preference for activity over repose, the ' " go " of the thing ' as Professor James calls it,[3] to speculations on its possible self-contained nature, has verbally come very near to leaving us with a mass of attributes and no subject. He is quite right in saying that we know nothing of our real self apart from activities mental or moral, and yet we must, in order to safeguard the permanence of personality, postulate an unity in which all activities are held together. This unity has had some light thrown on it in recent years through F. W. H. Myers' speculations on the subliminal self and by facts of psychical research, which prove that in the human spirit there is unconscious as well as conscious functioning. But we must beware of judging Ritschl by isolated statements. Neither the unity of the thing nor the unity of the soul is for Ritschl only a mental figment. In his pamphlet *Theologie und Metaphysik*,

[1] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 25.
[2] Pfleiderer, *Die Ritschl'sche Theologie*, pp. 11, 12.
[3] W. James, *Pragmatism*, p. 1.

he speaks of the thing as cause in its operations and purpose in the ordered succession of its apparent changes,[1] and in the same work he states distinctly that the cognising soul in the change of its corresponding sensations feels and remembers itself as an abiding unity. It is on the analogy of the soul that the concept of the unity of the thing is formed in our mind by the orderly arrangement of the successive appearances that we observe.[2] His account of the formation of the concept of a thing in the mind through 'memory-images' (*Erinnerungsbilder*), which are the result of continued impressions in space and time, may not be psychologically correct,[3] but it does not justify us in assuming that for Ritschl the thing was only a mental fiction. He has confused both himself and his readers by his neglect of the category of substance, but this is due to his practical interest in reality as manifested and actively operating in phenomena, which permeates his whole work, and not to the conclusions of genuine philosophical speculation. However much its sensations may change, the soul remains an unity and is conscious of itself as such; this is Ritschl's doctrine, and in view of it he is not really open to the objections of Pfleiderer. The previous statements quoted (see pp. 23, 24), on which Pfleiderer relies for his indictment, certainly do not accord well with the clear statement of the unity of the soul which appears in *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 19. But even those statements do not go beyond an insistence, even an extreme insistence, on the

[1] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 38.
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 38; cf. *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 19. (E. T.)

unknowableness of the soul apart from its activities : they do not assert the non-existence of the soul apart from its manifestations. In his polemic against Luthardt, Ritschl allowed himself to throw greater contempt on whatever is transcendental than his own position justifies. Just as to the pragmatists the intellectualistic view of truth—that it is the correspondence of thought with reality—is unsatisfying because it is essentially static and gives no scope for the exercise of man's intellectual activities, so for Ritschl questions of the nature of the soul, of any individual thing, and, as we shall afterwards see, of God and Christ, apart from the energies of the same, have neither interest nor value. Ritschl foreruns the whole modern pragmatic psychological movement in his exaltation of feeling and willing above the intellect. ' The elementary conception of the spiritual life as a real thing,' he writes, ' is only a preparation for man to recognise the peculiar reality of the spirit in the functions of feeling, knowing, willing, but especially in the last named.' [1] It is interesting in view of what Pfleiderer says as to Ritschl's doctrine of the soul and the belief in immortality, and characteristic of Ritschl himself, to find him insisting against the Calvinists that eternal life must not be divested of every relation to possible personal experience.[2] And though Ritschl has no claim to be considered an able philosopher, and his assertions do not always agree together, yet our gratitude is due to him for his wish to bring reality into as close touch as possible with the actual experiences of man. That the key to

[1] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 48.
[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 496. (E. T.)

truth is to be looked for in action is not only the belief of many of the most vigorous thinkers of the present, but is the meaning of the saying in the fourth Gospel, 'If any man willeth to do my will, he shall know of the doctrine.'

There is one other thing that we must remember in connection with Ritschl's epistemology, especially when we attribute to it a regulative influence over his theological system. His theory of knowledge was not formed apart from his theology, but in the closest connection with it. It is Pfleiderer's opinion,[1] to which Dr. Garvie subscribes, that Ritschl did not make his theory of cognition the basis of his theology from the first, but propounded it afterwards in its defence. And if his pamphlet *Theologie und Metaphysik* is, considered as a philosophical writing, intrinsically worthless, it is only fair to Ritschl to keep in mind that he was forced, by the attacks made upon him by those who were the defenders of what he considered the false Platonic metaphysic, to contest these points on ground that was not his own and with weapons in whose use he was not skilled.

If we now turn from Ritschl to his leading disciples, we find that whereas they agree with the master in his opposition to the Platonic metaphysic that had become traditional in Christian theology, they do not make his particular epistemology their own or represent exactly as he does the relation of theology to metaphysic. Herrmann appears to make the breach between theology and metaphysic even more complete than Ritschl. In his pamphlet *Metaphysik in der Theologie*, he declares that for the theologian as such

[1] Pfleiderer, *Development of Theology*, p. 183.

it is a matter of indifference whether philosophy be deistic, pantheistic, or theistic,[1] an assertion which, of course, does not imply that he would consider all these three solutions equally good as philosophy, but that Christianity, using other means for arriving at truth, need not look for support from speculative metaphysics. But though Herrmann will hear of no alliance between theology and metaphysics, he brings theology into the very closest connection with another great branch of philosophy—ethics. Ritschl never adequately correlated morality and religion, and saw in the voice of conscience no direct, unclouded testimony to God. Very different is Herrmann's position. For him, as for Kant and Schleiermacher, morality is the starting-point of religion. Morality gives a man the sense of his freedom from the world of nature, but has in itself no power to redeem from guilt; it is only as morality points a man to God that man can find it in God's revelation to him. For Herrmann, equally with Kant, the moral law is *a priori*, and the 'Christian idea of God is a function of the moral spirit, which seeks and experiences in that idea freedom from guilt and evil.' And a little further on in his pamphlet comes a passage which shows most clearly how radical is the difference which he finds between theology and metaphysics, and how inextricably at the same time is theology bound up with man's ethical convictions. 'We are forced,' he writes, 'to the conviction that what we mean by reality in Christianity is something quite different from what we mean by reality in metaphysics. In this latter case it signifies the creative reality by which we make

[1] Herrmann, *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie*, p. 21.

the possibility of all being and becoming intelligible to ourselves; in the former case it certainly stands in relation corresponding to the incommunicable experience of the worth of Christian goodness. The attempt to mix up these two involves the denial of the view that the ethical fact in which the world-view has its roots is a separate thing entirely neutral as regards the general forms of being and becoming, and one with which metaphysics cannot deal at all.'[1] Continually in Herrmann's works this insistence on the importance of the moral personality for a true judgment of religion reappears.

In distinction from Herrmann, Kaftan is generally classed as an empiricist. This is true in relation to his method, which is to be distinguished from Herrmann's faithful following of Kant as to a priority and autonomy of the moral law,[2] but Kaftan did not think that ultimate problems could be solved along the lines of empirical knowledge. The first part of his second volume on the *Truth of the Christian Religion* is devoted to a proof that such problems can be solved neither along the lines of empirical knowledge, nor along those of the traditional idealistic speculation, but that it is our duty to start with the primacy of the will in our self-consciousness, and of the practical reason in our philosophical speculations. Kaftan's whole spirit is less hostile to any mixing of religion with metaphysical speculation than is either Ritschl's or Herrmann's. The possibility of the extremest possible antithesis between the world-view of the

[1] Herrmann, *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie*, p. 17.

[2] Herrmann, *Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit*, pp. 162-164.

metaphysician and the theologian, which in Herrmann's opinion would rightly leave the latter quite undisturbed, would not be contemplated equally easily by the Berlin theologian. 'The sphere of thought peculiar to the Christian faith, and the sphere of thought identified with the rational knowledge of things, cannot be wholly apart from one another: it must be possible to combine them so as to make a whole.'[1] So he writes in the introduction to his *Truth of the Christian Religion*. Yet in a previous statement that 'knowledge never applies to God as He is in Himself, but always to God as He reveals Himself,'[2] we find him treading closely in Ritschl's footsteps.

The truth is that the Ritschlian dislike of metaphysics, and the anxiety of the School to bring reality down into the phenomena of the world, where it can be the object of man's more certain knowledge, is due in very large measure to pure theological interest. The common insistence on the revelation of God in the historic life and work of Christ, the attacks upon the traditional dogmatic as having buried the Gospel, God's power toward men, beneath an edifice of doctrines reared by the help of Neo-platonic forms, the aversion from mediæval mystical piety and its prolongation in certain types of Protestant orthodoxy, left the School no choice but to adapt their principles in metaphysics and epistemology to the needs of both their positive and negative theological position.

So far nothing has been said concerning the much challenged dualism of the Ritschlian theology, the entire separation of the domains of nature and spirit,

[1] Kaftan, *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, p. 11.
[2] Kaftan, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

which finds its subjective expression in the distinction made between theoretical judgments and judgments of value. We have seen that the School connects reality as closely as possible with phenomena in the world of sense, and we have seen also that the charge brought against Ritschl of allowing to the soul no existence independent of its activities, is not justifiable, despite rash language on his part; but we have not yet investigated the relation which in the Ritschlian view exists between the thinking, feeling, willing subject and the objects of knowledge, and the method by which he apprehends them. A special chapter must be devoted to this difficult question, but it may be said here that it is the present writer's opinion that there would be far less misunderstanding of what the Ritschlians mean by judgments of value (*Werthurteile*), if they were considered more in the light of Ritschlian positive principles as to the Christian revelation, and less by means of formal logical deductions of their supposed implications. We should certainly hear fewer charges of subjectivism directed against Ritschl and his disciples. To anticipate what must be gone into more fully later, value-judging is not something which acts as it were *in vacuo*, and constructs its articles of faith as it pleases. It is the method by which man grasps and appreciates aright objective God-given revelation. It deals with truths for faith and not with illusions of faith.[1] It is best, therefore, to discover wherein the Ritschlians find definite revelation and what may be its content, to deal with them just as we should deal with any other theological school, bringing ourselves face to

[1] See Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 408.

face with those truths of religion on which they lay all possible emphasis. And if we find that the Ritschlian School insists on things which are true and Christian, the fact that its members find the approach thereto in judgments of value rather than in judgments from which all considerations of value, weal, and woe, are eliminated,[1] will not prevent us from testifying to the good to be found in their positive doctrine. Doubtless it is important that men should arrive at truth by the right method, but it is more important that they should arrive at the truth. It is the object of the next chapters to show that even if the Ritschlians have exaggerated the importance of value-judging, some of their critics have still more exaggerated the place which value-judging holds in that system. Finally, our view of the value-judgments themselves, and of the unquestionable difficulty inherent in their application to certain doctrines, will gain in accuracy if we look at them in the light of those positive truths which Ritschlianism maintains in union with the whole Christian Church.

[1] Herrmann, *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie*, p. 8.

CHAPTER III

RELIGION AND THE IDEA OF GOD

THERE is no study that has grown more rapidly or with more fruitful results of late, than that of the origin and evolution of religions. Though concerned with the most fiercely contested question that divides men, it is capable of treatment apart from dogmatic prejudices and with reference to scientific interest alone. Though men may insist on the pre-eminent or even exclusive character of the religious revelation of God to Israel and afterwards in His Son, the problem of the universal quest for religion, among however primitive peoples and in however degraded a form, remains the same. Whence arises this universal instinct? How has it developed? Answers that may be given to these questions from a consideration of the facts of the past, which we call history, or from an investigation of the hidden recesses and complex workings of the human spirit, which we call psychology, can be without prejudice to the belief that among all nations and in every individual, God has not left Himself without a witness, so that the craving for some religion is itself a witness to His existence. Nor is it any sign of treachery to such a belief to try and indicate the circumstances under which, and the

means whereby, religions have sprung up and taken their varying forms.

No modern school has laid more stress than the Ritschlian on the God-given revelation which is necessary for man's religious life, and none has viewed with more disfavour the attempt to discover some universally-valid rational natural religion on which the facts of revelation can be superimposed. But Ritschl and his followers had to recognise the fact of the constancy and universality of the religious instinct. The religions of savages both long ago and to-day, tribal and national religions, religions characterised by the lowest kinds of idolatry and sensuality, or by the loftiest and most esoteric of philosophies, have developed and grown up apart from the Christian revelation, and with no dependence on the faith of Israel. Humanly speaking, some adequate cause must be discovered for all these in the mind of man.

Ritschl's solution of the problem has this merit, that it recognises the place external nature had in determining human conceptions. Anthropology and the study of early religions show us how intensely man was affected by natural phenomena. The powers of nature were the very first to be deified or, perhaps we should rather say, spiritualised. Man living among natural forces, some of which were friendly, some destructive, had to adjust his position with regard to them. Here then Ritschl finds his starting-point. 'In every religion,' he writes, 'what is sought, with the help of the superhuman spiritual power reverenced by man, is a solution of the contradiction in which man finds himself, as both a part of

the world of nature and a spiritual personality claiming to dominate nature. For in the former rôle he is a part of Nature, dependent upon her, subject to and confined by other things; but as a spirit he is moved by the impulse to maintain his independence against them. In this juncture, religion springs up as faith in superhuman spiritual powers, by whose help the power which man possesses of himself is in some way supplemented, and elevated into an unity of its own kind, which is a match for the pressure of the natural world.'[1] The fact that primitive man invested with supernatural powers the very agencies whose workings he feared, does not overthrow Ritschl's conception, for these could be propitiated when once it was believed that they were not blind and unbending forces, but spiritual powers having an intent toward man even if for his harm. And Ritschl goes on to point out that man regards these powers as personal on the analogy of his own personality. Thus the root-instinct of primitive man is self-preservation; and that his path through life may be smooth, not beset by perils and fears of suffering, loss, and premature death, he postulates spiritual powers, of which some as malignant and evilly disposed to him must be appeased by offerings, while the good spirits watch over and protect him.

This account of the origin of religion given by Ritschl is not complete, and is open to objections which have been brought against it, but it must be remembered that he repudiates any idea of formulating a general conception of religion, and indeed gives excellent reasons why any attempt at such a formulation must

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 199. (E. T.)

be attended by great difficulties.[1] We must content ourselves with considering whether, so far as it goes, it gives a true account of the rise of early religious ideas. But in order to appreciate his position fairly, it is best first to supplement it with the ethical interest which Herrmann imports into the upspringing of every religion, and to set alongside Kaftan's criticism and restatement. Herrmann's intense ethical feeling is prominent in his treatment of this question : he agrees with Ritschl in his view of the contradiction which man finds between himself as an element in the world of nature, and his superiority to it as a conscious spiritual being, but he deepens man's motive for desiring freedom over against the world by introducing the conception of the highest good and the necessity for its realisation, which can only be secured through religion.[2] 'Religion arises,' he writes, 'when man tells himself that he exists for the eternal.'[3] In one of his latest published works—an essay entitled *The Religious Question of the Present*, which with writings by other theologians goes to make up the little book *Das Christentum*—we find the same stress laid on man's moral sense as the door through which he comes to religion, that appears in *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie*, published more than thirty years ago. 'The realities of God and the soul are not to be found in the natural order.'[4] And he goes on to show that the beginning of piety is industry, and that moral earnestness alone

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 195. (E. T.)

[2] Herrmann, *Die Metaphysik, u.s.w.*, p. 8.

[3] Herrmann, *Warum bedarf unser Glaube geschichtlicher Thatsachen?* p. 22.

[4] Herrmann, Essay in *Das Christentum*, p. 106.

can be the way to life. In thus connecting religion at its outset with the moral consciousness of man, Herrmann has not only corrected Ritschl's position, which was in danger of looking at religion as a matter of mere utilitarianism, but has done good service to the cause of religion itself. It is in man's ethical sense, in the feeling of a claim upon him of a moral law which is not open to entire scientific analysis, that he will, if anywhere in himself, find the signs of God. No modern theologian has done more than Herrmann to insist on the centrality of the moral and all that that implies.

The desire for self-preservation is Ritschl's explanation of the origin of religion, and Herrmann, though supplementing him by the introduction of the moral factor, yet follows faithfully in the master's steps.

Kaftan, however, in his work on *The Essence of the Christian Religion*, argues that it makes God a means for man's own ends, and that in fact any such feeling on primitive man's part of his own specific dignity as a spiritual being was quite wanting. Religion, in his opinion, rises in man's desire for self-satisfaction, and the highest religion will be that in which moral and not natural goods are sought. This view of Kaftan's has recently been put forward as a part-explanation of religion by Bousset, who also was at one time under Ritschl's influence. He, in his *What is Religion?* says of religion that it is a 'striving after life,' though as a second determining factor he finds in all religions except Buddhism the belief in God or gods.[1] Kaftan, who carries Dr. Garvie with him in his criticism of Ritschl, imputes to Ritschl's thought too exclusively anthropocentric a character. His objections would

[1] Bousset, *What is Religion?* p. 12. (E. T.)

only be true if Ritschl were describing the ideal religious feelings of a man, and this is far from his purpose. Religion, faith in God, may begin with man calling in God to redress the balance of his own distressed life ; thus, persons who are generally worldly and irreligious turn to God in their troubles—not for His own sake, but that their affairs may be bettered. And in such a turning there may be the beginnings of true religion, so that he who would have used God but as a means to his own end comes to find that God Himself is for him the supreme End. It is inconceivable that Ritschl, who, as Herrmann tells us in his rectorial address on ' The Evangelical Faith and the Theology of Albrecht Ritschl,' thought of faith as unconditional submission to the revealed power of God,[1] should have intended to approve of any such relation between God and man's own ends as that which Kaftan condemns. But in the early stages of religion, whether in a nation of old or in an individual to-day, we do not expect to find man subordinating himself and his own ends to God. If Kaftan merely intends to imply that in primitive times man had no such thought of his own dignity and value as would cause him to feel hampered and cramped in a world where the forces of nature appeared all-powerful, we may point out that Ritschl does not commit himself to any extravagant statements as to primeval man's sense of his own worth, but is justified by the study of early religion in his opinion that it was the forces of nature, and particularly the destructive ones, which turned man's mind towards religion. As a matter of fact, Kaftan's and Ritschl's views do not exclude each other,

[1] Herrmann, *Faith and Morals*, p. 34. (E. T.)

and there is no reason to give one a decided preference over the other.

At the head of all religious ideas stands the idea of God, and no system of thought which omits this idea is rightly spoken of as a religion, while only as the conception of God is true will the religion that enshrines that conception be able to maintain itself. Now it is clear that a mere disposition towards religion, which takes the form of a hope that man may be able to depend upon the assistance of supra-sensual powers as he goes through life, is so far from necessarily containing a true doctrine of God that it is not even obviously theistic. Theism has more affinities with polytheism than it has with atheism, but its living interest and power is almost as effectively destroyed by the one as by the other. Man therefore needs means whereby he may come to know the truth about God, and may be able to sustain himself in the face of opposing theories. Ritschl's doctrine of God must now claim our attention.

The doctrine of God, as Ritschl saw, is the one where theology comes most directly into touch with metaphysics. 'Apart from the doctrine of God,' he says, 'the Christian dogmatic affords no opportunity for the distinct setting up of a metaphysical thought as theological.'[1] And when philosophy deals directly with this thought it has and must have its own method of setting it forth and explaining it in complete independence of theology and religion. To a certain extent these philosophical conceptions may be of use to the theologian, but rather because they encourage him with the knowledge that thinkers in another field of thought

[1] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 40.

agree with him in his belief that God is, than because they necessarily support his positive theology. This fact explains Ritschl's attitude towards the speculative proofs of God's existence which were a legacy from early and mediæval philosophy to the Christian theologian. Although these were severely criticised by Kant, yet they have been thought too valuable, as indicating philosophical agreement with theology, for theologians as a rule to discard them. But compromises were not congenial to Ritschl's temperament; for him the name of God is that which we often find in the epistles—'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,'[1] and philosophical concepts which cannot but fall short of this have for him no value as helps to a correct theology. In this spirit he deals with the worth of the three well-known speculative arguments for God's existence—the cosmological, the teleological, and the ontological. 'It is customary,' he writes, 'to state the cosmological argument thus—that if we seek a conclusion for the series of causes and effects in which things are arranged, we must conceive the first cause as *causa sui*, which is not also a *res causata*, and which therefore is God. Now it is true that the Christian idea of God, our Father in Christ, includes in itself the ideas of First Cause and Final End, as subordinate characteristics. But, posited as independent things, the conceptions of first cause and final end fail to transcend the conception of the world, and therefore fall short of the Christian idea of God.'[2] Apart, moreover, from the inadequate content of the idea of God to be

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, p. 182. (In Professor Swing's book, *The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl.*)

[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 215. (E. T.)

found in such proofs, they fail, 'for they are merely the expression of the idea that, if we wish to cognise the world as a whole, we must *of necessity think* God in addition as its First Cause and Final End. This, however, gives us no guarantee that anything real corresponds to the thought in our minds, which is necessary on the condition stated.'[1] In other words, we cannot by these arguments rise from the existence of God for our thought to His existence as a reality. The same is true of the ontological argument, whether as stated by Anselm or Descartes: it is only able to show that the inference to a perfect and infinite Being is valid for our thought, but can never rise to certainty that this Being possesses a reality objective and independent of our thought.[2]

Ritschl has not dealt altogether fairly with these speculative proofs of the existence of God, seeing that they do not profess to supply an adequate conception of God, but only to show that reason demands a Supreme Existence apart from and superior to the world. And though Ritschl never has anything but contempt for a definition of God which merely tells us that He is not the world, still these arguments have their value as against the dogmatic materialism which finds in the world, that is, in the totality of phenomena, its own cause and its own purpose. But these arguments are not in general use, being confined to a section of the philosophic world, and their non-use on the ground of invalidity leaves no sense of loss behind. It is different when we approach the moral arguments for God's existence, and find that in their

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 216. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 217. (E. T.)

usual form at least Ritschl dismisses them. For these arguments can be and are appreciated by persons who have had no philosophical training, and have the more force because they spring from that moral sense which is the deepest thing in man. The fact of the presence of a conscience in man, its imperative claims, and the impossibility of fitting it into any purely naturalistic explanation of the world, is for many the weightiest indication of God. Ritschl does not deny all truth in this, but he will not allow that it is a valid scientific proof. To use a term which we have yet to investigate fully, the description of conscience as the voice of God is a value-judgment. But Ritschl does not see in conscience immediate coercive evidence of its divine origin. In close connection with the argument from conscience stands the argument from the moral world-order. Ritschl's method of dealing with this argument is as follows. He surveys two theories of the moral world-order which are supplementary to the idea of God. The one, which is the rationalistic Socinian conception, 'depends on the position that God, as the unrestricted Sovereign over all His creatures, out of His mere good pleasure treats mankind with equity, though in themselves they have no rights against Him. The other theory defines the relation of God to humanity thus—that He regulates the inter-relations of the reciprocal rights subsisting between Himself and men by a law and dispensation of justice which is a necessary outcome of His own nature.'[1] This latter is the position of Lutheran and Reformed orthodoxy. Now there is much acuteness shown in the detailed criticism of

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 229. (E. T.)

these positions, but it is a remarkable fact that Ritschl never deals with the common form of the argument from a moral world-order to God, but argues against methods of representing that world-order which have arisen when once the idea of God has been given. The only point in his criticism where he touches the inference drawn from the moral meaning observable in the world to God, is where he says that 'the assertions which are made regarding God, as He was before the world and before the moral order existed for man, are either purely formal determinations, which have no force until the content of Revelation is taken into account—*e.g.* the conception of the personality of God—or they are words without meaning.'[1] But the whole meaning of any true argument from the moral world-order is that we are able through a consideration of the world, and by giving due weight to the centrality of the ethical therein, to rise to see behind the world an active *personal* Will; this deserves a better fate than the contemptuous rejection which it experiences at Ritschl's hands in this long discussion. But what strikes us as most remarkable is that in another place Ritschl has quite incidentally, and almost as a matter of course, stated and accepted the ordinary argument from the moral order of the world. He is criticising Strauss's romantic conception of the universe as being at once cause and effect, inner and outer, and points out that such an universe ceases to be an object of scientific knowledge and becomes an object of the imagination alone. Now in this universe, according to Strauss's idea, the laws of

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 239. (E. T.)

reality are also the forces at work in reality, that is to say that there is no difference between what is passive and what is active. ' In this way of looking at things,' Ritschl continues, ' it is altogether forgotten that a law, as imposed, refers us back to a legislative and imposing Spirit and Will, and *that the moral order of the world implies a Creator* Who lays down laws and governs according to a fixed purpose.' Again, a little lower down he writes, ' We need not be intimidated by the further assurance that it is a mark of limited intelligence to demand an ordaining Will as the " prius " of a law, and from the Will to deduce likewise the active force exhibited in the phenomena embraced by the law.' [1] There is nothing to show that Ritschl disputes Strauss's premisses as to the existence of laws of reality : on the contrary, the trend of the entire argument goes to show that he accepts the premisses, but points to a quite different conclusion as resulting from them. The truth is that Ritschl found at hand a most obvious and valuable weapon for his polemical purposes, and very naturally used it. Later, when arguing against different opponents, he depreciates all assertions about God as He existed before the moral world-order as either purely formal determinations or meaningless expressions. But the imposition of a real law implies the existence of a Being Who is prior to the law and imposes it ; and of this Being Ritschl tells us that we must think of Him as a legislative Spirit and Will. Surely this is neither a purely formal determination nor a meaningless expression. What often makes Ritschl's theology so difficult is that it is constructed in opposition to

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 231. (E. T.)

rival views and is continually determined by polemical motives. Hence arise contradictions, sometimes of a glaring nature, and his positive thought is hard to grasp. The argument for God's existence which carried most weight with Ritschl was the moral argument as stated by Kant—that the idea of God is necessary for the unification of the spheres of nature and of ethics, natural and moral good. In his first edition of his great constructive work he attempted to show that science in its own interests demanded this idea. His own discussion ended with the words, '*Annahme der Gottesidee kein praktischer Glaube, sondern ein Act theoretischer Erkenntniss.*' ('The acceptance of the idea of God is not a practical belief, but an act of theoretical knowledge.') But by the time that the revised third edition appeared, Ritschl's opposition to any successful theoretical proof of God's existence had increased, and he reversed the conclusion to his argument with the words '*Diese Annahme der Gottesidee ist, wie Kant bemerkt, praktischer Glaube und nicht ein Act theoretischer Erkenntniss.*'[1] ('This acceptance of the idea of God is, as Kant remarks, a practical belief and not an act of theoretical knowledge.') The change of front is the more remarkable in that there is no great difference in the reasoning prior to the conclusion. There is, however, a criticism on Kant by Ritschl which throws some light on the difficulty. Ritschl blames him[2] for opposing practical reason as one species of reason to theoretical reason as another. If, then, practical and theoretical reason belong to the same species, Ritschl's drastic change

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 225. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 222. (E. T.)

from a conclusion which is the result of theoretical knowledge to a conclusion which is the result of practical faith, is not such a *volte-face* as it seems at first sight. For the practical reason which Ritschl censures Kant for opposing to theoretical reason is the very thing in Kant which is most closely akin to and prepares the way for Ritschl's doctrine of value-judgments—that is, judgments determined by the practical impulse of faith. At the same time we must admit that Ritschl's own practice elsewhere scarcely justifies him in blaming Kant.

The fact that for Ritschl the theoretical proofs of the existence of God break down or come short of their object, does not imply that he held that there was valid theoretical support for anti-theistic world-views. We have already seen that he levels formidable objections at the pantheistic view of the Universe which Strauss came to adopt. His reaction from the whole Hegelian position led him to look with particular disfavour on the conception of the Absolute as applied to God, and in his work *Theologie und Metaphysik* he sets himself to controvert Frank's statements, who, writing from the orthodox side, had claimed that we must make God, considered as the Absolute, the starting-point for a coherent doctrine of God.[1] Dr. Garvie has pointed out [2] that Ritschl misunderstood and misrepresented Frank, who asserted nothing more than Ritschl himself was bound to admit. Yet in these days when a vague and nebulous pantheism, which knows nothing but the God immanent in all things, and which is always in danger of losing sight

[1] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 17.
[2] Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 255.

of the fundamental distinction between good and evil, is a far greater danger to Christianity, and indeed to any theistic world-view, than the aggressive materialistic dogmatism of the middle of the nineteenth century, Ritschl deserves our gratitude for setting out so clearly the irreconcilable difference between the Absolute of a pantheistic system and the personal God of Christianity. He equally opposes materialism as trying, without adequate materials, to frame an interpretation of the world.

Ritschl then maintains firmly the personality of God. But this conception appears highly speculative, and is one to which special objection has been taken by philosophers on grounds intelligible to the ordinary person. Personality, as we know it, is something restricted, something that exists in time and space and is shut in on every side by the action of natural laws. Can we then attribute it to God without restricting Him in similar manner, or without evacuating the term of all its significance? Before we can further consider the advisability of describing God as personal, the difficulty inherent in the term has to be met. Ritschl meets it by an analysis of what personality means when applied to men, and comes to the conclusion that we cannot claim full and complete personality, but that our personality develops towards that full personality for which we are designed. 'The truth of the idea of the personality of God rather is verified just by our finding in it the standard which determines whether and how far the same predicate is to be ascribed to us.' [1] In this way his earlier desire to vindicate the claim of theology to be a science

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 236. (E. T.)

by proving that "the conception of personality can without contradiction be applied to God,'[1] is satisfied.

It is an interesting argument, and similar ideas find a place in Dr. Moberly's great work *Atonement and Personality*, but it is unquestionably speculative and metaphysical. If Ritschl had without further comment predicated personality of God, we should have had to admit that his doctrine of God is as much under the influence of metaphysics as that of an idealist philosopher. This, however, is not the case. Ritschl opposes a philosophical defence to a philosophical attack, but it is not philosophy which assures him of the personality of God. In order to that we pass straight to the ruling principle of Ritschlianism. 'Personality,' he writes, 'is the form in which the idea of God is given through Revelation. As theology has to do with the God revealed in Christ, this is justified scientifically as the only practicable form of the conception of God. The content of the Divine Will is to be deduced from the revealed reciprocal relations between Christ and God, and from no other principle.'[2] Philosophy has been able to tell us little about God; we must go elsewhere; we need not trouble ourselves with questions concerning God as He is in Himself, questions which must always remain unanswered, for He has revealed Himself, and in that Revelation we shall find all that we need to know about Him. The historical positivism of the entire Ritschlian School has come into view, and we must now investigate its notion of Revelation.

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 228. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 237. (E. T.)

CHAPTER IV

RITSCHLIANISM AND REVELATION

'RELIGIOUS truth,' says Professor Oman, speaking of the Ritschlian attitude, 'is made up of God's revelation on one side and man's judgment of worth on the other.'[1] This is indeed one of the truths for which the Ritschlians chiefly stand, and it is hardly possible, after reading what they say, to deny that for them religion is no mere outward projection of man's inner needs, but something which draws all its vitality from God's own dealings with men. It may not always be easy to understand what Ritschl or Herrmann mean when they speak of revelation, and so far Dr. Orr is justified in his complaint of the lack of careful investigation of its nature,[2] but of their belief in an all-important revelation of God there can be no doubt. And to indicate what this general conception of revelation is, before passing on to a consideration of particular statements, we may say that for Ritschl and his followers revelation is found in history which is to be interpreted through the idea of purpose,[3] that it is enshrined in the Bible and centres in the Person of Christ.

[1] Oman, *Problem of Faith and Freedom*, p. 379.
[2] Orr, *Ritschlianism, Expository and Critical Essays*, p. 107.
[3] Cf. Oman, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

Professor Herrmann has dealt with the problem of Revelation from the standpoint of his own intense moral realism. In his early work, *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie*, he makes the bold statement that ' the Christian idea of God is only possible as a function of the moral spirit, which seeks and experiences in it freedom from guilt and evil.' [1] Taken by themselves, these words leave an uneasy suggestion that man produces God from the extremity of his own moral need, but Herrmann goes on at once to insist on the organic connection of this idea of God with the revelation in Jesus Christ. His Giessen lecture on ' The Conception of Revelation ' is really a commentary on the above-quoted words, marked by the intense ethical feeling and the sense of the all-worthiness of Jesus Christ, which make him the most attractive and—without any prejudice to the other members of the School, be it said—the most distinctively Christian of all the Ritschlian theologians. Revelation, then, is something which actually touches a man in the midst of his sin and need, and it must be something objectively manifest in history, not something detached from everything external. Not in doctrines nor even in the thoughts of Scripture shall we find what we want, but we do find it in the Person of Jesus. We do not need to use any violent endeavour to bring ourselves to an appreciation of Him, for no work of ours can avail us, but in our temptations we become aware of Him as of something real. Jesus meets us in the Gospels or in the Christian lives of those around us, and leads us to trust Him by revealing the Good and claiming to make the Good real in the world, and

[1] Herrmann, *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie*, p. 17.

also through His own life lived in undisturbed confidence in the love of a God Whom He has recognised as the holy power of the Good. Thus the revelation of God in Christ awakens faith in man, and the Church must ask for more teachers who know and can show what true God-awakened faith is.

The above is a very brief exposition of the leading ideas of Herrmann's lecture. We note the way in which he relates revelation to man's moral sense, the most central part of his being, as something which actually effects for him what he desires here and now, in order that his life may be freed from elements which have over him a power that he hates while he experiences it. And he is right in saying that neither doctrines, though they may be true, nor even the Holy Scriptures themselves, can supply man's need. Revelation must be of a Person when addressed to a personal being. Clear expression is again given to this in his pamphlet, *Worum handelt es sich in dem Streit um das Apostolicum?* ('What is involved in the discussion about the Apostles' Creed ? ') There he declares that it is not any doctrine of Christ's Godhead which can save a man, 'but the man Jesus alone is the Mediator, Who, by the redemptive might of His own personality, works in the sinner the redeeming knowledge that in Him he has to do with God Himself.'[1] And Herrmann proceeds to draw the perfectly correct distinction between the experienced, redeeming power of Jesus as a fact of personal conviction and the deduction from it of Christ's Godhead. He argues against Cremer that if it is only through Christ's manhood that we come to a knowledge

[1] Herrmann, *Worum handelt es sich in dem Streit um das Apostolicum?* pp. 10, 11.

of His Godhead, a position which Cremer admits, the human life of Jesus must of itself have great value for a man. Herrmann allows that we should not have a Redeemer in the man Jesus unless we could go on to predicate Godhead of Him, but this, he says, 'does not imply that we must have acquainted ourselves with the proposition of Christ's Godhead before we can find the Redeemer in Christ. Much rather because He Himself becomes effectual to us for our redemption, do we recognise His Godhead.'[1] The same message runs through his work *Die Gewissheit des Glaubens und die Freiheit der Theologie* ('The Certainty of Faith and the Freedom of Theology.') Only when Jesus in His historical work has wrought on man the conviction that in Jesus there is the Revelation of God, can he pass to thoughts of the exalted Christ and considerations of the true doctrine of Christ's Person. Theologians must draw out the consequences which follow from saving faith in Christ; 'we on the contrary,' he continues, 'wish to confine our attention to showing to the man who eats his bread in the sweat of his face, how he can find in Jesus Christ the God Who forgives his sins.'[2] And whereas Bender in his work on *The Essence of Religion* declared God to be a 'thought-image of our phantasy,' Herrmann sees the real world as the only sphere in which we meet God. Once more he insists that Christ's appearance can work upon us without its being first necessary to inscribe His picture with a title,[3] and that He helps us in our moral need. The ethical note is never absent from Herrmann,

[1] Herrmann, *Worum handelt es sich, u.s.w.*, p. 13.

[2] Herrmann, *Die Gewissheit des Glaubens und die Freiheit der Theologie*, p. 23.

[3] Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

but he never makes God the mere postulate of our moral position. Like St. Paul, he understands what the moral sense, the knowledge of good and evil, can do, and where its power stops. It can show him where he stands, it can create in him a great feeling of need and a craving for redemption, but it has no redeeming power in itself. In another of his writings, *Warum bedarf unser Glaube geschichtlicher Thatsachen?* ' (Why does our Faith need historical Facts?'), this connection of the moral law with Christianity is brought out still more clearly. The soul of man can only become free as he submits himself to some moral necessity, and when once he has done this he is on the very threshold of Christian faith. But just as an individual finds God in the moral experiences of his own life, so he sees God working in history, and therefore past history cannot be ignored and religion made a matter of truths of reason, as Lessing thought; ' we must take into consideration as an element of our present life the past out of which our existence comes. In human history there is one event which exercises the power of a revelation of God, and which must be for every man a fact which he takes into his own inner life: this fact is the appearance of Jesus Christ as it is handed down to us in the books of the New Testament. . . . The question, why does our faith need historical facts we answer in this way:—because only from the facts of our history can we win the assurance that God seeks us out in our present life and has a care for us.' [1]

In laying such stress on God's revelation in Christ, Herrmann is in line with Christian theology from the New

[1] Herrmann, *Warum bedarf unser Glaube geschichtlicher Thatsachen?* pp. 30, 31.

Testament downwards. But his method of approaching the question, so that a man begins with the human life of Jesus and considers the meaning of the power over himself which he experiences in that life, though by no means new, has not been the universal custom. Luther, whose opinions Herrmann expounds in his book *Verkehr des Christen mit Gott* ('The Communion of the Christian with God'), argued against those who held that Christ must always be approached with the presupposition that He is the Son of God: such a procedure was to build the roof before the foundation had been laid. Christ could only be apprehended as God after He had been apprehended as man, and Christ as man would cause us to view Him as God ('*Christus homo habitus Christum Deum sponte sua adducet.*') And Luther explained that the flesh preferred to start with the Deity of Christ because it shrank from the entry into glory through the cross.[1] Luther was not always consistent with himself, a fact well known to the Ritschlian theologians, but he brought back into the Christian Church the true method of approaching the Person of Christ, and the Ritschlians tread in his steps. Dr. Orr, criticising Herrmann, says that 'he reduces the impression we receive from Christ to something so indefinite and formless that no proper theology can be deduced from it.'[2] But apart from the fact that Luther and other orthodox theologians, starting from almost identical principles, have found themselves able to build up and defend systems of theology, surely the word 'indefinite' is singularly unfortunate. It may not be easy to analyse such an impression, but an

[1] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 168. (E. T.)
[2] Orr, *Ritschlianism, Critical and Expository Essays*, p. 65.

impression which is capable of revolutionising a man's conception of the world and altering the entire character of his life, cannot possibly be indefinite to that man. And it is with the individual so impressed that we are dealing, for certainly a proper theology cannot be built up by persons who entirely lack these impressions, while it is a veritable commonplace that those who have seen in Jesus a Person Whom they cannot fit into the natural order, have gone on to confess Him as Lord and God. Theology has suffered and still suffers immensely because the redemption wrought through Jesus has been made the mere consequence of presuppositions about Him, instead of standing as it should in the very forefront of Christian theology, as the great realisable fact of Christian experience. Herrmann in Germany and Dr. P. T. Forsyth[1] in England have grasped this beyond all others, and recalled Christians to a right understanding of the proper sequences of the facts and doctrines of our religion.[2]

But we must pass on to other members of the School, and next to the founder himself. We have already seen in the last chapter that for Ritschl the personality of God was made certain by God's self-revelation in Christ. He has not brought out as fully as Herrmann the complete significance of revelation, but his systematic work is conditioned throughout by God's revelation. Thus he writes, 'In Christianity revelation through God's Son is the "punctum stans" of all knowledge and religious conduct.' 'Christ founds His religion with the claim that He brings the perfect re-

[1] Forsyth, *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind passim*; cf. articles in *Hibbert Journal* and *Contemporary Review*.

[2] See Note C.

velation of God, so that beyond what He brings no further revelation is conceivable, or is to be looked for.'[1] Later on he deals with the idea of God's providence from the standpoint of the positive revelation, and affirms that here also we cannot dispense with the knowledge gained from revealed truth. It will be noticed that revelation is for Ritschl no formal conception without content: those religious truths of which we feel sure are given us through this revelation; forgiveness, for instance, as the outcome of the love of God, is not an obvious truth of natural theology, but is revealed by Christ and guaranteed through His revelation of the Father.

From Ritschl we turn to Kaftan. The claims of intellectual investigation and speculative thought get more consideration from him than from some other members of the School, but his conception of revelation as an objective fact, historically mediated, does not differ from that of Herrmann and Ritschl, and there is no ambiguity in his statement which we now quote. 'Conformably with the ethical character of Christianity, the revelation of God should be sought in history, which is the sphere of moral growth and development. The belief that God Himself, through Jesus Christ, has interposed in the history of men and offers Himself to men for fellowship with them, is the consummation of our faith in Revelation. Revelation is a real self-revelation of God, and on the other hand, inasmuch as it is given in history, it has relatively to the individual and his faith objective ground and authoritative significance. There is also implied in it, owing to the spiritual character of the Christian religion,

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 388. (E. T.)

a real communication of supernatural truths.'[1] We must not understand these last words as meaning that in revelation the theological doctrines of Christianity are communicated to men, a view which Kaftan decisively rejects. Still he does not wish to leave the content of Revelation undefined. 'The Atonement and the Kingdom of God, as these may be comprised in the conception of the blessing of salvation, form,' he tells us, 'the content of Revelation.'[2] Kaftan goes further than is usual among Ritschlians in his attempt to show the reasonableness of the Christian revelation. His argument, put very shortly, is as follows: The Kingdom of God is the rational idea of the chief good, but nothing is thereby proved as to its reality. The Kingdom is a postulate of practical reason, and from this postulate arises the further postulate of an historical revelation of God which shall proclaim the Kingdom in the world. Only a divine revelation can make its existence certain, for the fact of the Kingdom does not belong to this world, so that no mere logical deduction can prove its existence; and the inner experience of the fact of the Kingdom of God, though necessary for the individual, can only originate in consequence of revelation. We then consider historical reality and discover that what reason demands is what the Christian Church has constantly witnessed to as to her origin and power. Here then the relations of reason and revelation are adequately settled, since they meet in the same conception of the chief good. This proof refers also to the Atonement, which is the neces-

[1] Kaftan, *Truth of the Christian Religion*, vol. i. p. 96. (E. T.)
[2] Kaftan, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 411. (E. T.)

sary prius for the setting up by Christ of God's Kingdom among men. It does not deal with the question of the Atonement's objective necessity in the will of God, but with the fact that *for man* Atonement must precede the establishment of God's Kingdom; and for this, too, divine revelation is necessary.[1] It must be admitted that it is too subtle and circuitous a proof to be very successful as an apologetic, a fact which Dr. Orr points out,[2] though at the same time we might have expected him to show a little more sympathy for a Ritschlian who does attempt to demonstrate the truth of what he holds.

Reischle, in his pamphlet, *Der Glaube an Jesus Christus und die geschichtliche Erforschung seines Lebens* ('Faith in Jesus Christ and the historical Investigation of His Life'), while admitting that men have come to believe in God by many means, sees in Jesus the unique revelation of God, a Person of convincing reality, Who can so become part of a man's life that he need never fear lest criticism should deprive him of what is so vital to his existence; while Harnack, in his most valuable little work called *Christianity and History*, draws similar attention to the uniqueness of Christ's personality, its abiding and pre-eminent value, and the consequently justifiable confidence of the Christian that criticism will never rob him of his faith. These two writers do not investigate the problem of revelation with any fulness, but their method shows that in their main conceptions on this point they are at one with other members of the School.

[1] Kaftan, *Truth of the Christian Religion*, vol. ii. pp. 379-390. (E. T.)
[2] Orr, *Ritschlianism, Critical and Expository Essays*, p. 65.

There is one further criticism of Dr. Orr's on the Ritschlian view of revelation which we may consider here. Their view of positive revelation, he says, 'does not accord well with their fundamental position that religion moves solely in the sphere of value-judgments. For if we get out to objective revelation we have clearly broken through this magic circle of value-judgments, and are in the domain of judgments of fact and truth. Or is our judgment that this is a Divine Revelation itself also only a value-judgment?'[1] But even granted that the theory of value-judgments is the fundamental Ritschlian position, still that presents only one side, man's side, of the problem of religion. On God's side there is revelation, and the fact that for the Ritschlian religious knowledge consists in value-judgments is no obstacle to their admitting objective revelation; how that revelation is to be apprehended is another matter. But in view of what has been quoted from the Ritschlians with reference to revelation, and the small place that value-judgments hold in their discussions of it, it may be doubted whether the importance of value-judging in the Ritschlian system has not been exaggerated. Finally, when Dr. Orr offers us as an alternative the view that the judgment that this is a divine revelation is 'only' a value-judgment, he seems to imply that a value-judgment either partially or wholly lacks reality, a point on which more must be said in another chapter.

The Revelation of God in Christ is enshrined in the Bible. The question how far that revelation depends upon the truth of the records is one of the

[1] Orr, *Christian View of God and the World*, p. 407.

most disputed of theological problems. With this question the Ritschlians were faced, and one of the chief moving causes in their theology was their desire to make the truth of Christianity independent of critical results. Such a task is plainly necessary, and the Ritschlians have faced it with considerable success. But the belief that critical results cannot disprove the Christian religion has not led the School as a whole to look with favour on advanced criticism ; on the contrary, considered as a body of German theologians, they are distinctly moderate. We are accustomed in this country to look on Germany as the home of the most advanced, and sometimes the wildest, criticism, and it is therefore the more noteworthy that the members of so eminent a School as the Ritschlian should not, on the whole, go beyond the limits of what is now generally recognised as sound and moderate criticism. Thus Ritschl himself, while discarding the doctrine of its verbal inspiration and complete inerrancy, gives the Bible a conspicuously high place in his system, and, with all other Evangelical theologians, finds in it the source and norm of all Christian doctrine. Moreover, he does not follow Schleiermacher's example and attach comparatively little importance to the Old Testament, for in his opinion the New Testament can only be understood through the help drawn from ' the original documents of the Hebrew religion gathered together in the Old Testament.' [1] There is a close connection between the Old and New Testaments, in that the Christian idea of the Kingdom of God, which is brought to

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, p. 172. (In Professor Swing's *The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl.*)

the very front in Ritschl's system, 'finds its presuppositions proper solely in the religion of the Old Testament; in the fact, that is, that the One God is, to begin with, the Ruler, as He is the Father, of the chosen people, and that He stands surety for that personal, independent, religious morality which follows from His righteousness.'[1] Ritschl brings out very clearly in places the fact that the religion of the Old Testament is imperfect, and that its ideas, *e.g.*, with regard to God's forgiveness, cannot be allowed regulative value in Christian doctrine; yet the conception of a revelation of God in the history of Israel, though not worked out at all fully or indeed clearly, is not absent from his theology.

Both Kaftan and Herrmann distinguish Holy Scripture from the revelation it contains, and see that it is not the acceptance of its narratives as unquestionably true, any more than it is assent to doctrines, which leads the individual to understand the fact of God's self-revelation. 'Holy Scripture,' says Kaftan, 'is not itself the revelation of God to us; revelation proper is rather found in the advent of Jesus Christ. This revelation is received and appropriated by faith. . . . Holy Scripture forms the intermediate link between revelation itself and the faith of later generations. It possesses this significance as the record of revelation, as a body of writings which partly report of revelation, and partly arose themselves in connection with it.'[2] Similarly, with Herrmann, Holy Scripture which records revelation must not be put on an equal

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 312. (E. T.)

[2] Kaftan, *Das Wesen der christlichen Religion*, p. 437. (Quoted in *The Truth*, etc., vol. i. p. 123.) (E. T.)

footing with revelation itself. The right method is not by the use of historical judgment to become confident of the truth of the New Testament narratives, and then to see therein God's revelation in Jesus Christ. No historical judgment can attain to more than probability.[1] It is the personal inner life of Jesus, as portrayed in the New Testament writings, which alone is able to overwhelm the soul with the certainty of reality, and to bring us to entire trust in Him. 'Thus in a moral experience there becomes clear to us what it is that can be the basis of faith.'[2] Owing to the inextricable connection of the life of Jesus with the Scripture narratives, it is impossible to put Herrmann's argument in a logically convincing form; yet the distinction he draws between the narratives themselves and the personal Life which stands out from them and subdues the soul is a true one. The Life of Christ given us in the New Testament is not a mere succession of details, each one of which, taken by itself, is questionable. Consider each detail in itself, and we must admit that historic criticism has its rights of investigating, of probing, of separating the true from the false; consider the Life of Christ as a whole, and we shall agree that historic criticism can never rob us of Him as a past and permanent factor in human history.

Some light is thrown on Herrmann's attitude by his criticism of Ritschl's position in the work *Die Christlich-Protestantische Dogmatik*, to which he has contributed a section on Ritschl. Ritschl, he says, while seeing that in the Person of Jesus alone has the Christian a reconciling revelation, did not sufficiently distinguish

[1] Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 72. (E. T.)
[2] Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 76. (E. T.)

between a Fact which could be experienced, and doctrines. 'That Ritschl did not apprehend this,' he goes on, 'is clear from the manner in which he understood the expression "the historic Person of Jesus." He meant by that the tradition which can be found especially in the Synoptic Gospels, with the elimination of some traditional traits, but including the Resurrection. The content of such a tradition is without doubt not a fact which we ourselves experience. The tradition with this content is itself a doctrine. If we understand the expression "the historic Person of Jesus" in this way, we have no right to call it the Fact which reconciles us, for then it has for us not even the power of a fact experienced by ourselves. In any case it is not difficult to find the way back from this conception of Ritschl to the orthodox principle that Christian faith takes its start with the willing reception of a doctrine. And what has he fought more strenuously than this principle?' Herrmann's meaning seems to be that Ritschl directed his faith too much to the evangelical narratives and not enough to the Person to Whom they bear witness, but Who is not dependent on them, and Who proves Himself real to the soul in His own way. It is the difference in Greek between πιστεύειν with the direct dative of the object, and πιστεύειν constructed with εἰς or ἐπί, and it is significant that in the New Testament books the latter construction, not the former, is normal. It is easy to see that any formulated doctrine of inspiration is impossible for Herrmann, for the effect of such a doctrine is to give the Holy Scriptures a value of their own prior to their use by the individual and the worth he may experience from them, and this in his

opinion would endanger the true conception of faith, making of it a work that a man determines to accomplish in his own might, instead of submission beneath the overmastering revelation of God.

In dealing with the Ritschlian view of revelation and the Ritschlian attitude towards the Bible, it is impossible to leave out of consideration the question of miracles, which is so intimately connected with both. It is the more necessary to deal with it because of what seems to the present writer a common misunderstanding of what the leading Ritschlian theologians really mean on this point. It is his hope by bringing together their most important statements on this subject, and distinguishing between the Ritschlians' attitude to the Gospel miracles as facts and their attitude to them as events of doctrinal significance, to put the matter in a clearer light.

The old orthodox view of miracles, which, though not extinct, is much less common to-day, found its belief in the truth of the evangelical accounts greatly strengthened by the conviction that miracles were essential if there was to be any certain revelation of God to man. Thus the Gospel miracles were raised to the highest pitch of significance, and all other apparently miraculous events were explained away. Butler and Paley both adopted this position, while more recently it has been defended at length by Dr. J. B. Mozley in his Bampton lectures on 'Miracles.' It is a position which finds its chief support in Scripture in the Gospel according to St. John, in which miracles are certainly looked upon as evidential. Now this position must not be summarily rejected. If the Gospel miracles really happened, they could not but

be evidential; if our Lord stilled the tempest, the disciples could not but wonder what manner of man He was, and so be led nearer to the knowledge that He was the Son of God. But this does not prove that the miracles were evidential in intent, and the weakness of the old view which makes the possibility and truth of revelation depend upon the accompanying miracles, is that it is certain to make unbiassed investigation of the historicity of the accounts much more difficult. We ought then to keep apart as far as we can the question of the fact of miracles from the question of their significance, and this is exactly what the Ritschlians have done. And again we shall beware of going too far in any explanation we may give of miracles, whether we say that they were breaches of natural law, or that they indicated the existence of higher but unknown laws. Here also we find the Ritschlians maintaining a perfectly legitimate reserve. Our first business is to discover, if we can, whether the events recorded in the Gospels happened in the way narrated; and though we may fairly consider whether they accord with our general conception of the Person of Christ, and so have not merely to do with the actual historical evidence for a number of detached events, we must not prejudge the whole question by assuming the fact of revelation and demanding miracles as an inevitable corollary.

Dealing first with Ritschl's own statements in connection with miracles, we come across the following passages in his work *Unterricht in der christlichen Religion* ('Instruction in the Christian Religion.')

'The religious view of the world is based on the fact that all the operations of nature are at God's disposal when

He wishes to help men. Accordingly, remarkable natural occurrences, which are in experience connected with especial help from God, are regarded as miracles, and thus as special tokens of His gracious readiness to help believers. Therefore the conception of miracles stands necessarily in reciprocal relation to a special belief in the providence of God, and apart from this relation is quite impossible.'[1] It would be very surprising to learn that the writer of this passage rejected as untrue all the Biblical narratives in which God is represented as using the operations of nature for the precise purpose of helping men. There is a long note appended which is equally unintelligible if Ritschl really cut out everything miraculous from the Bible, but we must leave it till we are considering Ritschl's view of the significance of miracles and their relation to natural causation. Further on in the same work he speaks of Christ's sufferings as being no loss to Him, but a means for His glorification through the assurance of the supra-mundane continuation of His life. 'Accordingly, His resurrection through the power of God is the consistent completion, according to the worth of His personality, of the revelation through Him, which is final both in respect to the actual will of God and to the destiny of man.'[2] Dr. Orr lays stress on the use of the word *Auferweckung* (reawakening) here, instead of the usual word for resurrection, *Auferstehung*, and remarks that the context seems to deny the reality of physical miracle.[3] The present writer must confess that he is unable to

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 17. (E. T.) (In Professor Swing's book.) [2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, § 23. (E. T.)
[3] Orr, *Ritschlianism, Critical and Expository Lectures*, p. 98.

see in the context the very slightest suggestion of any such denial, and, despite the word *Auferweckung*, holds that Dr. Garvie is fully justified in his statement that the above statement of Ritschl's is one 'about which, at least, he can discover no ambiguity.' [1]

Now let us turn to Ritschl's great systematic work. The following quotation shows that Ritschl undoubtedly accepted the fact of Christ's miraculous power: 'His power of miracle did not go so far as to make trial of itself in any alteration of the great mechanism of the world, such as the expectation of the Prophets had associated with the setting up of the Kingdom of God. The miraculous power of which he was conscious, and which He reckoned part of His equipment for His vocation, is exercised within a much more limited sphere. But even if this fact were less evident than it is, the narratives are not of a kind to allow us to discover any rule as to how far the supremacy of Christ's will over external nature actually extended, the more so that we have no similar experiences at our command to disclose to us the psychical and physical grounds of Christ's miraculous power. Not in itself, but because of the enforced lack of the means of explanation, this is a sphere which does not lend itself to scientific investigation.' [2] If we are anxious to know whether Ritschl believed that Christ possessed and exercised miraculous powers, we need not go beyond this passage, which proves that as to the fact of miraculous occurrences Ritschl's position is by no means extremely vague. Moreover, we can supplement what has been

[1] Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 410.

[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 456. (E. T.)

quoted from the *Instruction* with reference to Christ's Resurrection, first of all by his statement that death is no longer an object to be feared 'since Christ has reconciled men and risen from the dead'[1]; and secondly by his reference without any mark of disapproval to 'the Christian hope of the survival of the spiritual life in an appropriate body,'[2] which necessitates, *a fortiori*, belief in Christ's continued existence in some bodily form. In addition to these passages, there is a quotation which Ecke in his work *Die Theologische Schule Albrecht Ritschls* ('The Theological School of Albrecht Ritschl') gives from one of Ritschl's lectures on Dogmatics: 'Our whole view of Christianity assumes the recognition of the resurrection of Christ as a fact in which is most directly proved the prerogative of God to create, and to create life out of death. We would surrender the whole Christian view, if we were to surrender this key to our whole mental attitude with the argument that the restoration of a dead man to life contradicts natural law.' And that by resurrection he means what the Christian Church has meant from the first, is clear when he adds: 'It is self-evident, according to analogy, with what Paul expresses in 1 Cor. xv., that Christ made Himself known to His disciples in the body.'[3] In Ritschl's work there is only one sentence in which the bias appears to be against a particular miracle; arguing against opponents of his doctrine of Christ's divinity, he writes that 'they require us to find the essential nature of Christ, not in His world-conquering

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 360. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 609. (E. T.)
[3] See Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 225.

will, which marks Him as the God-man, but in His physical origin, which has never yet been reconciled with His historical appearance, and never can be.'[1] His meaning is extremely obscure, but as he is contesting the position that it is Christ's different nature, rather than the perfect harmony of His will with God's will and consequent superiority of His will to all worldly things, which gives Him His pre-eminence, we must admit that the words seem to indicate disbelief in the Virgin-birth. But we have seen before that Ritschl's statements, when he is directly polemical, must be received with caution, and we may at least say that the above sentence is very much more obscure on the negative side than are his statements in favour of the possibility and truth of miracles.

From Ritschl we pass to some of his best-known followers. Kaftan is quite clear that miracles happen 'in the history of Revelation and in the life of Jesus Christ.'[2] He is even prepared to assert that some of these run counter to the laws of nature and yet need not be given up. Harnack, with regard to this question, is generally looked upon as a typical German Liberal, but a careful study of his treatment of it in his lectures on *Das Wesen des Christentums* ('What is Christianity?') should lead to a more favourable view of his attitude. He declares against any interruption of the order of nature, and therefore can say: 'Miracles do not happen'; but at the same time he affirms that the course of nature is not a blind and brutal course, but serves higher ends, and that we are not yet acquainted with all the forces working in

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 468. (E. T.)
[2] Kaftan, *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, vol. ii. p. 398. (E. T.)

it, even those inherent in matter, while of psychic forces we know still less. Thus he grants that of the marvellous and the inexplicable there is no lack, and admits that we have become more careful and hesitating in our judgment of miraculous stories, so that while we do not believe, and never shall believe again, that a she-ass spoke or that a storm was stilled by a word, we shall not summarily dismiss as illusive narratives of the lame walking and the blind receiving sight. He concludes his discussion with the words, 'It is not miracles that matter; the question on which everything turns is whether we are helplessly yoked to an inexorable necessity, or whether a God exists Who rules and governs, and Whose power to compel nature we can move by prayer, and make a part of our experience.' As to particular miracles, he rejects the Virgin-birth, but in his book *What is Christianity?* is more cautious concerning the Resurrection than in his *History of Dogma*. He will not allow us to base our faith on a miraculous physical rising-again, but accepts the fact of the tomb being empty, and does not attempt to say what happened at the grave, and in the matter of the appearances. We may regret that Harnack so definitely declares for the inviolability of the natural order, but apart from that his attitude is not only cautious and reverent, but contains in itself, unobserved perhaps by him, the possibility of reaching a more positive standpoint. When once it is admitted that nature serves higher ends and can be compelled by God in the interest of those ends, it is no far step to the belief that a storm may have been stilled by a word or five thousand persons miraculously fed.[1]

[1] Harnack, *What is Christianity?* pp. 27-29, 163-167. (E. T.)

Herrmann's position has been left to the last because of his very important Giessen lecture on *Der Christ und das Wunder* ('The Christian and Miracle'), which was delivered in the summer of 1908, and of which it seems desirable to give a rather full account. Before this he had not dealt in any detail with the problem of miracles, though in one of his earliest works, *Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit* ('Religion in relation to World-knowledge and Morality'), he opposes himself to dogmatic unbelief and leaves us in no doubt as to his faith in the Resurrection. Attempts to prove the abstract possibility or impossibility of miracles, he regards as valueless, and calculated to lead to un-Christian conceptions, since they are bound up with conceptions, common to apologists and antagonists alike, of nature as a closed whole, to which he refuses to subscribe. Accordingly, 'if the life of Jesus in the Gospel narratives shows a number of wonderful facts, it is dogmatic prejudice to declare these to be impossible on account of their marvellous character.'[1] As to the Resurrection, he writes: 'It is quite unintelligible to me how the belief that His Person in its entire being and working is the manifest act of God for our eternal welfare, and thereby is the revelation of the being of God Himself, can free itself from the conviction that He actually rose again, on which conviction the community, after He had departed from it, was raised up, and which, by historical proofs of unquestionable and weighty character, is put in the way even of the uninterested.'[2] What he means by an actual rising-

[1] Herrmann, *Die Religion, u.s.w.*, p. 386.
[2] Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

again is shown by his approval a little lower down of the sentence in which Gass makes 'actual' equal to 'bodily.' Herrmann deals with another miraculous event in his pamphlet *What is involved in the Discussion about the Apostles' Creed?* issued in connection with the controversy over the Virgin-birth and its position as an essential article of faith. But here he makes no personal profession of faith: his attitude towards the miracle is not unfriendly, and he admits that the idea of a Virgin-birth may be conjoined with the conviction that in Jesus God has entered the history of our race, and that Jesus is not to be put on the same level as the sons of men; but his interest is to point out the danger and even the sin of compelling persons to affirm things about Jesus before they have come to know Him and to experience His power; and as the Virgin-birth depends upon the narratives of others, and a man cannot verify it in his own experience, it ought to be one of the very last things that any one should be called upon to declare as true. The conclusion of the whole matter for Herrmann is really to be found in his words—'he who has found Jesus will find the right attitude to such a problem as the Virgin-birth.'[1] So much for Herrmann's earlier positions; we now come to his last year's essay. Herrmann begins by admitting that the idea that special isolated phenomena reveal God's working in the world is heathenish, but, for all that, agrees with Rothe that miracles cannot be harmonised with scientific knowledge or belong to nature. Moreover, while we experience miracles because we believe in God, it is only as we do experience miracle that we

[1] Herrmann, *Worum handelt es sich, u.s.w.*, p. 13.

can believe in God, and the conception of miracle in the Church has always been that things which are not in accordance with law can and do happen.[1] Passing to a consideration of the teaching of Jesus, he finds that Jesus demanded of His disciples, not belief in miracles told by others, but that they should experience and work miracles themselves: and accordingly 'we may expect of every one who speaks of God working on him, that he should experience as true things which are above and contrary to (*supra et contra*) nature:[2] to give up the idea that the believer experiences and does what is not possible through nature (*durch die Natur*) is to give up religion. Now religion implies belief in God, and though this is sometimes treated as a 'natural' truth, it is really one which has to be won again and again, and it is won 'whenever we see miracle shining forth in the reality with which we have to deal, and are uplifted thereby.'[3] This, he goes on to say, is overlooked by those who make miracle the child of faith, since the self-consciousness of religion finds its knowledge rooted in the fact of miracle, and the old thought that the experience of miracle is faith's moment of creation must not therefore, as Stange proposed, be given up as a merely heathenish theory. But miracles cannot be proved to be such; indeed any such proof would divest them of their miraculous character: yet for us, while we hold to the fundamental thought of miracle as a reality other than nature, revealed by God to man, there is no such help

[1] Herrmann, *Der Christ und das Wunder*, p. 31. (In the writer's edition, this essay, being preceded by another, begins at p. 28.)

[2] Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 34. [3] *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

as was the lot of the ancients, who could separate from nature the idea of its valid and regular order (*seine Geltung*).[1]

Herrmann so far has been refusing to allow the fact of the order of nature to rob us of our belief in possibilities outside of and indeed contrary to that order. Never does he lose sight of the fact that God's care for man cannot be brought within the bounds of natural order, that its very conception therefore is miraculous. But he sees that he has not thereby solved the problem for men to-day who are finding the miraculous a stumbling-block, and he sees that the problem relates to the difference between the attitude of our age and past ages to the Biblical narratives. From the earliest times assent to the truth of these miracles was considered to be almost necessary for salvation; the Reformation with its true distinction, even when not fully worked out, between real experimental faith and belief in what other persons have said, seriously affected this attitude and rendered more difficult of apprehension the right standpoint on the part of the Christian miracles reported by others. Herrmann illustrates the necessity of dealing carefully and tenderly with these difficulties by quotations from Rothe and Seeberg, both believers in the Biblical miracles, and yet both anxious that the Church should not estrange men from faith by insisting on a recognition of the Biblical miracles. At the same time Herrmann criticises Seeberg for his tendency to lay stress on doctrines about Jesus, and especially the Resurrection, rather than on the uniqueness of the appearance of Jesus as a fact beneath which man can bow himself in

[1] Herrmann, *Der Christ und das Wunder*, p. 42.

pure, complete submission. 'The doctrine that in Jesus God Himself appears to us, and similar dogmas about Him, are,' he writes, 'of priceless value: but the foundation of faith cannot exist in them, since then faith could not be pure obedience.'[1] And whereas it is Seeberg's conclusion that because men live in the miracle of God's love they will know that this miracle had a miraculous beginning in history,[2] Herrmann, distinguishing sharply between the power of God in Christ which saves men, and can therefore claim men's entire obedience, and the miraculous narratives for which no similar obedience of faith can be demanded, denies that faith can compel any one to accept these narratives as real. 'Our faith only compels us to look in the tradition preserved by the Christian community for the traces of the miracle, through which this faith knows itself to have been created. That it should also be necessary to take from the content of this tradition something which has not become our own experience, and to agree that it happened long ago in the manner recorded, is an assertion which is not in a position to make its religious right intelligible. People may call it churchly and 'positive,' but nevertheless it is not Christian. And every one who wishes to obey God rather than man will repudiate it absolutely.'[3]

The conclusion of the essay is taken up with a consideration of the Christian's proper attitude to the Gospel miracles, and the following positions are claimed as essential :—

1. Apart from all considerations of historical criticism, miracles must be able to become

[1] Herrmann, *Der Christ und das Wunder*, p. 57.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 63. [3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

for every Christian a means whereby he may experience the redeeming power which appears to him in the Person of Jesus, the one fact which wins complete dominion over Christian souls.[1]

2. All those who can speak of fundamental religious experiences should try to make them intelligible to the community. And whatever remnants of heathenish piety remain in Christian conceptions, no one has any right to coerce other Christians who have not yet overcome this inner feeling of necessary reverence for what is impersonal (*des Unpersönlichen*).[2]
3. It must be fully understood that 'every one is in great danger who thinks it essential to bring himself to look on the content of these accounts as real events. He must always look on them merely as means given him for his salvation. And they can continue to be of such a nature, only if he does not trouble himself at all with the question, whether they all happened just as recorded, but is always considering how he can experience the one power, which, by its complete dominion over him, proves itself to be the power of God.'[3] Herrmann goes on to explain the difference between his position and Seeberg's: while they both find the ground of a Christian position in an experienced, not in a recorded, miracle, for Seeberg the decisive moment is when a

[1] Herrmann, *Der Christ und das Wunder*, p. 67.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 67. [3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

man suddenly acknowledges as true accounts that were formerly incredible. Herrmann, on the other hand, while leaving on one side the question whether that can be the experience of one who is becoming a Christian, contends that what really is of decisive importance is that which makes a man a Christian, and for this what is decisive is his perception of God in this very tradition. The Christian will not therefore delay long over the question of the probable truthfulness of the narratives, seeing that the power which subdues the soul is not to be met with in miracle [1]—the contrary position being heathenish and un-Christian—but in the wonderful power exercised over our lives by the Person of Jesus, as He meets us in the pages of the sacred tradition.

4. All attempts to weaken the thought of miracle which really belongs to faith must be resisted. 'Among these attempts we must reckon the endeavour in the thought of miracle to call in question its collision with the thought of nature. He who experiences miracle, will from this experience see the collision.' [2] Thus, because Christians to-day experience realities

[1] Throughout Herrmann's essay the general word used to express 'miracle' or the 'miraculous' is *Wunder*. And it is used in places with clear reference to the Biblical miracles (cf., *e.g.*, p. 34). But in this passage (p. 69) the word used is *Mirakel*, and the context shows that he is in agreement with Stange, that an act which contravenes natural law is not to be thought of as the one conclusive proof of God's working in the world.

[2] Herrmann, *Der Christ und das Wunder*, p. 70.

which cannot be fitted into the conception of nature, miracle is for them, much more than for the old theologians, superior to and contrary to nature. Miracle was for these an event which even a man who did not assent to the supernatural could hold as true, and which therefore was still an event in the natural order even though without precedent in his experience: to-day, however, no miracle can be real for the man who admits nothing but nature. 'For us miracle is an event in which we see acting the power of the God for Whom nature must be a whole subject to Him, that same nature which for our consciousness remains an immeasurable but lawfully ordered plurality.'[1] The treatise ends as follows:—'Where real faith in the living God arises, man will experience miracle and effect miracle. And where a man through the word of the Scripture is brought to Christ Himself, he will in the miraculous narratives of the Bible honour God's gifts, in which for him and for others a blessing is hidden, which he must not spoil. Let that be sufficient for us.'[2]

Now what is it that Herrmann has tried to bring out most clearly in his lecture? Clearly not that particular Biblical narratives recording miracles are either true or false, for he does not deal at all with concrete instances. But it is his wish to induce the Church to adopt a truer *method* of investigating the whole

[1] Herrmann, *Der Christ und das Wunder*, p. 71.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 71.

question, which in its turn would lead to truer results. It is, in fact, a long exposition of his meaning when he said in his earlier pamphlet already referred to, that he who has found Jesus will find the right attitude towards the Virgin-birth and similar problems. And his method is to try and make people see what their conception of God implies, and what is the verdict of their own souls' experience. No one ever was less anxious to subordinate the things of the spirit to the things of the natural order. Nature for him has its own sphere and its own validity (*Geltung*), but at the same time it is a means to God's ends, and God's ends for man involve continual collision with this order and transcendence of it. Herrmann's thought is reduced to a mixture of platitude and nonsense if we imagine him to be merely conceding the reality of what are known as 'moral' miracles, while refusing to allow the possibility of interference with the physical order. It is true that he lays stress on the experience of Christians at present, and that Christian experience to-day does not vouch for interferences with the physical order, but his argument is that our own miraculous experiences to-day will lead to a right view of the miracles recorded in Scripture, and this cannot be by giving us the right to reject all the Scripture miracles—that is, to be exact, the so-called physical miracles. His further assertion that the Scripture miracles are not *per se* evidential and redeeming is obviously right, for our attitude to-day towards the Holy Scriptures does not justify us in accepting recorded events as true without further question. To say that we believe in the fact of Christ's miracles because we believe in Christ is an inaccurate manner

of expression, for faith in Christ can only predispose us to believe that He wrought miracles, but cannot prove that He did; nevertheless it is incomparably truer than the converse statement that we believe in Christ because we believe in His miracles. Faith in narratives, even in the Biblical narratives, unless we have a doctrine like Verbal Infallibility to vouch for their complete truth, is not Christian faith. Christian faith has for its object a Person, Who by His personal relation to and power over man, justifies the confidence placed in Him, and faith in Christ will, according to Herrmann's view, not only lead to a right attitude towards the miracles recorded of Him, but will remove the obstacles to the possible acceptance of them as true. For the common objection to miracles is not that the evidence is insufficient, since many Biblical events resting upon precisely the same evidence are admitted to be true, but that any evidence would be insufficient in view of the fact that nature is an ordered whole admitting of no variations. This latter dogma Herrmann shatters by his reliance on the strength of the personal spiritual life, and especially the personal spiritual life of Christ, to be independent of nature and to dominate it through the power of God, for Whom nature is a means to His own ends. If then Christ cannot be brought within the confining bounds of nature—and every work of Herrmann's testifies to this faith of his—there is no further reason to reject His miracles. But confidence must be directed to God and Christ first, and[1] those of little faith are not those who have doubts as to doctrines and narratives, but those who,

[1] The end of this sentence is taken from a lecture of Professor Herrmann's which the writer heard in Marburg.

when in difficulties, lose trust in the Eternal God, and in Jesus Christ, for Jesus demands the same confidence in Himself as in God His Father. Finally, the writer must say again that for Herrmann there is no such dualism as would keep nature independent of the ordering, directing, and, if necessary, altering hand of God; while his whole essay, even though one may wish that he dealt with concrete instances of Biblical miracles, is a most suggestive and valuable contribution to the problem.

This examination of Herrmann's work brings us on to the further question of the significance and implications of miracles for the Ritschlian School. Herrmann, as we have seen, while strongly holding to a world-view that is extremely friendly to miracles, discounts the value of miracles for apologetic purposes, and will not make them essential to Church-membership. Very much that he says in his latest work on these points is almost identical with his discussion in his work *The Communion of the Christian with God*,'[1] where he brings out clearly the difference between faith in Christ and faith in miracles, and shows that recorded events have not in themselves any redeeming power. Similarly in his pamphlet *What is involved in the Controversy about the Apostles' Creed?* while agreeing with Cremer that the chief question for the Christian is who and what Christ is, he denies that the right solution to it is reached by historical means; and protests against the view that a religious answer to that question must necessarily lead on to the historical judgment that Jesus was born of a Virgin.[2]

[1] *Communion*, etc., pp. 230-236. (E. T.)
[2] *Worum handelt es sich, u.s.w.*, pp. 14-16.

Kaftan, while taking exception to the definition of miracle which sees in it primarily 'an exception to the laws of nature,' seeing that 'laws of nature' are nothing real, yet admits that miracles may represent deviations from the course of nature, which are only explicable if something of the character of law is introduced.[1] Ritschl himself examines the question in his great work, and lays it down that 'collisions between religion and science, especially natural science, arise only when laws which are valid for narrower realms of nature or spirit are erected into world-laws, and used as a key to open up a view of the whole.'[2] And he tries to show that even the scientific view of the world cannot dispense with the assumption of miracles, since 'miracles in the sense of effects which are not produced according to law, are assumed in every philosophical or scientific theory of the universe; for no such theory is without gaps; and these gaps are discernible whenever such effects are affirmed as are not mediated by any known law. Moreover, without the conception of end it is simply impossible to essay the explanation of organisms or of nature as a whole.'[3] Further on he writes: 'A view of the world which is teleological, and in detail even miraculous, which answers to man's need of religion, which guarantees to him his position as a spiritual and moral whole in his connections with nature and human society, is—as compared with our knowledge of nature and its laws—anything but irrational; or, if it is so, then the delusion to which we submit in religion is repeated likewise in

[1] Kaftan, *Truth of the Christian Religion*, vol. ii. pp. 397-398. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 616. (E. T.)
[3] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 616. (E. T.)

every investigation of nature, even when conducted solely in accordance with the law of efficient cause.'[1] This attempt to carry the war into the enemy's country is not very successful. Gaps in a scientific theory, even if they are of the nature of effects without causes, are not miraculous, and increasing knowledge tends to fill them up ; while a teleological view of the world is by no means the same as a miraculous one. We must now return to the note mentioned above (p. 72) which he appends to his declaration in his *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, that miracles are instances of the special gracious providence of God and can only be understood as such. He begins by pointing out that the religious conception of miracle ought not to be measured against 'the background of the scientific acceptance of the orderly coherence of all natural events,' since in the Old and New Testament a miracle is never looked upon as a breach of natural order ; miracles therefore as religious corollaries of God's providence do not refute 'the probability of the coherence of the whole world in accordance with natural law.' 'Nevertheless,' he continues, 'if certain accounts in the Bible appear to be contrary to these laws, it is neither the duty of science to explain this appearance nor to confirm it, nor is it the duty of religion to recognise those narrated events as divine operations contrary to the laws of nature. Neither ought one to base one's religious faith in God and Jesus Christ upon a preceding judgment of this kind, especially since every experience of miracle presupposes faith. Beginning, however, with faith, every one will meet the miraculous in his own experience, and, in view

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 617. (E. T.)

of this, it is entirely unnecessary to stumble at the miracles which others have experienced.'[1] These words are convincing proof that Ritschl, while perfectly prepared to grant miraculous facts, refused to commit himself to any explanatory theory. Dr. Orr, however, seems to see in this attitude (for he does not refer to this actual passage) an implied disbelief in the facts themselves. 'It is an inept plea,' he writes, 'that the Scripture conception of miracle has no relation to the modern notion of natural law. Nothing is clearer than that, if the modern assumption of an unbroken chain of causation in the world is correct, the miracles recorded in the Gospels *did not happen*.'[2] But, in the first place, Ritschl never assumed an unbroken chain of causation, though he admits that it is probable that the whole world coheres in accordance with natural law; however, even supposing he did, Dr. Orr himself offers him an alternative to breaches of natural law, as an explanation of miracles, for on the very page on which Dr. Orr's note appears we find it declared in the text that if Christ worked miracles and literally rose from the dead, 'there have been breaks in the world's order as we know it, or a transcendence of that order.' This latter theory, as Dr. Garvie[3] points out, has been accepted by theologians of undoubted orthodoxy, and was perfectly open to Ritschl if he cared to adopt it, whatever his views might be on the natural order as we know it.

On miracles then we may sum up as follows:—If by Ritschlianism we mean the statements and im-

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, note to § 17. (E. T.)
[2] Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith*, p. 199.
[3] Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 223-224.

plications of the system of theology created by Ritschl and developed by his more immediate disciples, there could hardly be a more unfortunate misunderstanding of the Ritschlian position than that which caused Professor Denney to write : ' In point of fact they (*i.e* the Ritschlians) reject miracle altogether in any sense which gives it a hold on man's intelligence or a place in his creed.' [1]

We have seen that Ritschl explains the world by the idea of purpose, that is, he gives it a teleological character. This is seen also in his conception of the reason for any revelation having been necessary. The great end which God wills, and which is to be realised among men, is the Kingdom of God, and to this revelation is most closely related, for without it man would not have been able to rise to the idea of the Kingdom of God. ' In Christianity,' he says, ' the Kingdom of God is represented as the common end of God and the elect community, in such a way that it rises above the natural limits of nationality and becomes the moral society of nations.' [2] Again, ' The Kingdom of God is the divinely vouched for highest good of the community, founded through this revelation in Christ.' [3] It is the revealed ethical ideal of Christianity, just as justification by faith, the other focus of the ellipse to which Ritschl compares Christianity, is the religious ideal. Herrmann also directly connects the Kingdom of God as God's own end with the moral work of man, which also is exercised towards this end in accordance with God's revelation ; ' the thought of the Kingdom of God

[1] Denney, *Studies in Theology*, p. 10.
[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 10. (E. T.)
[3] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 5. (E. T.)

is an invaluable moment of Christian faith, that is the thought of the universal moral community, as which mankind is placed in God's self-end. The reality of the Kingdom of God must in some way have seized man and positively influenced his thought, if he is to be able to trust God in the Christian sense.'[1] Kaftan, while inclined to give a more pronouncedly eschatological character to the Kingdom of God, equally puts it in the forefront of the Christian Revelation.

But if the purpose of God's revelation is the gradual building up of the Kingdom of God, and this is man's moral task, the question must arise whether this moral task began with Christianity or whether there was not some preparation in past history, some work along the same lines and leading up to the concept of the Kingdom. Besides this we shall need to ask how other religions must be thought of in the light of the Christian revelation. These are important questions, and we must see whether the Ritschlians, who will make no use of 'natural' theology or speculation for attaining to the knowledge of God, are able to allow to those who are not members of the Christian community any insight into and intent towards divine things.

First of all, then, has there been any historical preparation for the Kingdom of God, the great moral end of the Christian revelation? Pfleiderer[2] here distinguishes sharply between the first and third editions of Ritschl's systematic work, and while admitting that in the first edition the Kingdom of God is merely the highest state of the moral community, separated at no greater distance from earlier

[1] Herrmann, *Die Religion, u.s.w.*, p. 431.
[2] Pfleiderer, *Die Ritschl'sche Theologie*, pp. 31-32.

states than they from each other, contends that in the third edition this is all changed, and that natural relationships which embody the spirit of love and union, such as the home and the country, are no longer looked upon as anticipations of the perfect love to be realised by men through fellowship in the Kingdom of God. This is Pfleiderer's view, and it is accepted by Dr. Garvie, who writes: 'God is represented as introducing His purpose for mankind in the Kingdom of God without any previous discernible indication of His intentions. Such a view does injustice on the one hand to human history which does afford evidence of a moral progress towards wider sympathies and more extended obligations; and it shows dishonour to God, Who cannot be conceived as having rested from His labour after the creation through the ages of pre-Christian history, as having left Himself without witness in the consciousness and the experience of man.'[1] The present writer finds himself compelled by the evidence to separate himself from Dr. Garvie, usually the safest of guides, on this point, and cannot but feel that Dr. Garvie has too trustfully accepted as correct the representation given by Pfleiderer, who, though possessing great logical acuteness, needs very careful checking where any point in the Ritschlian theology is at issue.

Dr. Garvie quotes the following three passages, the first and last of which are also referred to by Pfleiderer, as indications that in Ritschl's final opinion natural moral associations had no place in preparing for the Kingdom of God.

[1] Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 92.

(i) 'God is love in that He reveals Himself through His Son to the community founded by Him, to form it into the Kingdom of God, so that He realises in this purpose for mankind above the world, His honour, the fulfilment of His end for Himself.' [1]

(ii) In the Kingdom of God, which is above the world, mankind 'reaches a supernatural unity in the mutual and common dealings from love, which no more finds a limit in family, rank, or nationality.' [2]

(iii) 'All love of men springs, according to the Christian representation, out of the revelation of God in Christ.' [3]

Now it is true that the first two sentences are ambiguous when compared with the decisive statement of the first edition, that 'God loves the human race from the historical standpoint of its destination for the Kingdom of God, and its education to this end forms the content of all history,' but the fact that Ritschl speaks only of God's love in reference to the community does not necessarily imply that in the history of the world previous to Christianity there were no traces of the love of God, and no foreshadowing of that kingdom in which love was to be perfectly revealed. The second passage is particularly noticeable with regard to this point, for it implies that the same love which has its place in family and nation reaches beyond these to the supernatural Kingdom.

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 282. (E. T.)

[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 281. (E. T.)

[3] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 238. (E. T.) The translations given above are all Dr. Garvie's.

The third passage, as it stands, certainly seems to make a complete severance between the 'love' which may have been present in the family or tribe, and the true love which comes from God's revelation in Christ. But it occurs in a different part of his work, and if we look at the context we see that Ritschl is not thinking of comparing different kinds of love among men, but of contrasting the love men are able to show with 'the fulness of love which is applicable to God alone,' from the revelation of which in Christ human love springs. The question of how far there was true love among pre-Christian men is not before him; he is dealing with men for whom the revelation of God's love in Christ is a given fact, and relating their love to that.

These sentences of Ritschl then, even when taken by themselves, do not establish Pfleiderer's and Dr. Garvie's position. But there are also other statements of Ritschl in view of which this position cannot be maintained. The first statement comes almost immediately after the second sentence which Dr. Garvie quotes. 'The idea of the Kingdom of God,' says Ritschl, 'gives a supra-mundane character to humanity as bound to Him, *i.e.* it both transcends and completes all the natural and particular motives which unite men together.'[1] Here then the Kingdom of God as a supernatural bond is represented as not essentially different from the natural ties of love, etc., which unite men, for while it transcends them it also completes them, that is, its difference is one of degree, not kind. The next of our passages is still clearer; he says: 'The question is, whether the knowledge we

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 281. (E. T.)

have, that the Kingdom of God as grounded in the divine love is the final end of the world, throws any light on the character of the existence which the nations led up to the entrance of Christianity into history, and which even Christian nations lead, so far as we can abstract from their belonging to the Kingdom of God. For if the moral association of nations in the Kingdom is the end which God is pursuing in the world, then the inference is unavoidable, that the previous history of the nations must have stood in some teleological relation to that higher state of development, and in some positive degree prepared the way for its advent, and that a similar order of things must obtain also in every Christian nation as a pre-condition of its Christianity. Observation, therefore, would have to verify the indications of the connection thus suggested by demonstrating with some measure of certainty that *the human race is educatively prepared for the Kingdom of God.*'[1] (Ritschl's italics.)

Our third passage is as follows: 'The Kingdom of God, in the Christian sense, can be proved the final end of human history only if there existed even previously standards somewhat analogous, which determined the worth of human life and prepared the way for the appearance of the perfect moral standard.'[2] Further on, when discussing the whole question of the education of humanity, he writes: 'The idea of the Kingdom of God, as the moral fellowship of men proper to their nature, had its way and influence prepared by the fact that it was preceded

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 304. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 305. (E. T.)

by the moral fellowship of the Family, national fellowship in the State, and, lastly, the combination of several nations in the World-empire. The Christian conception of the Kingdom of God in part stands in the closest analogy with all these graduated forms, and in part it is genetically derived from them.'[1] Finally, we may refer to his undoubted approval of Augustine's view that 'there is an ascending succession from the peace of the home to the peace of the State and the peace of the heavenly kingdom—a succession which expresses the generic unity subsisting among the aims of every human society, and therefore proves that each of the spheres thus compared is, in its own way, independent of the others.'[2] Surely, in view of these clear statements by Ritschl, we cannot agree that 'God is represented as introducing His purpose for mankind in the Kingdom of God without any previous discernible indication of His intentions.'[3] Ritschl, as a rule, is not sympathetic towards fragmentary and tentative advances in the direction of full Christian truth, but on this point, at least, he is more wide-minded than we might have expected, and certainly than in the account given of him by even so friendly and just a critic as Dr. Garvie. Harnack, in his review of Ecke's book, *The Theological School of Albrecht Ritschl*, speaks of Ritschl as meaning by history, which for him was the supreme teacher in the province of practical knowledge, 'the whole course of human history, which in its real kernel is religious history, and this he took as the material

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 309. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 315. (E. T.)
[3] Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 92.

from which he drew his teaching.'[1] This shows that Harnack at least did not think Ritschl guilty of the complete secularisation of all history except that bound up with the Christian revelation.

Our last question has to do with the Ritschlian attitude to non-Christian religions, and to the fact that men professing these religions have attained at times to lofty conceptions of God, not far removed in some cases from the Christian idea. As all the lines of advance to God recognised by 'natural' theology are for the Ritschlians false in method and inadequate in result, and as God's historical revelation is in Christ alone—for the preparation in history for the Kingdom of God can only be appreciated from the standpoint of the Kingdom itself, that is, from the position of membership within the Christian community—it is hard to see how the School can allow any truth to non-Christian religions. Ritschl's contempt, in his *Theologie und Metaphysik*, for the 'alleged natural consciousness of God,'[2] seems to point in this direction. It is true that we can set against this Ritschl's statement elsewhere that 'no idea of a religion complete after its own order can be formed if the characteristic of revelation which belongs to it is either denied or even merely set aside as indifferent,'[3] but, after all, this does not get us very far since it does not tell us anything about this 'characteristic of revelation,' neither in what sense the word revelation is used, nor, which is most important, whether this revelation is to be looked on in

[1] Harnack, *Reden und Aufsätze*, vol. ii. p. 353.
[2] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 7.
[3] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 202. (E. T.)

any way as true. His generally unfavourable attitude to non-Christian religious ideas is seen in his expulsion from Christianity of the conception of a twofold co-ordinate requital of good and evil, the falsity of which he seems to find primarily in the fact that it was one of the ideas of the religion of the Greeks.[1]

The obstacles imposed by the main principles of the Ritschlian theology to any clear understanding of the element of truth in other religions are clearly visible in Herrmann. He is genuinely anxious to allow to other religions, and persons who are not Christians, their element of true religion, but he is unable to give any explanation of it. For Christians the one means of communion with God and of forming right ideas of God is the Person of Jesus Christ; 'we by no means wish to assert, even for a moment,' he writes, 'that the savages of New Holland have no knowledge of God, no pulsations of true religion, and therefore no communion with God. But we do not know through what medium such knowledge and such communion reach them.'[2] And in another of his works he connects closely the historical appearance of Jesus with the history of Israel, with Greek culture, and with the organisation of society under the Roman state, all of which 'belong to His historical existence.' But the whole Ritschlian attitude to non-Christian religions and piety is one of the least clear and, we must add, least satisfactory parts of the system.

We have tried to obtain a definite view of the great objective principle of the Ritschlian theology. Its merits and defects have been indicated, but a fuller

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 260-261. (E. T.)
[2] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 62. (E. T.)

appreciation must wait till we are in a position to judge it in connection with its results in the systematic theology of the School, and with the Ritschlian system as a whole. But if religious truth comes through revelation, there must be something in man capable of receiving it and appraising it rightly. Metaphysics, as we have seen, will not help us to this, and we now go on to a consideration of the difficult question of the value-judgments (*Werthurteile*), and the place given them by Ritschl and his disciples.

CHAPTER V

THE VALUE-JUDGMENTS

THE ultimate problem for man is how he shall understand the world in which he finds himself. Nature and history both challenge him to say whether the solution to their difficulties is to be found simply by a careful analysis of their respective contents and an investigation of the causes which have determined, step by step, the progress and decay observable in both, or whether, on the other hand, the true solution is to be looked for not within but without and above. Just as the answers differ, so do the methods by which it is held that the true answer can be given, and the three great constituent activities of the human mind, feeling, will, intellect, all have their champions. Fortunately it is not necessary here to go into this question, which of late years has come to be so much more keenly debated owing to the rise of pragmatism or humanism ; we have only got to consider the way in which the Ritschlians have conceived of the ability of the human mind to come to a knowledge of the truth, and some of the attacks that have been made upon their position.

Human thought, then, works upon the phenomena of nature and history. This is true even of those systems which evacuate these phenomena of all

reality and find that in abstract thought and its processes alone. We have to settle accounts with things as they are, or as they appear, in this world before we can pass on to the transcendental. And this is the first thing which it is necessary to remember about the Ritschlian value-judging ; it is a means of understanding aright given phenomena. As Dr. Orr quite truly says—though not with reference to the Ritschlian value-judgments, 'Judgments of value do not hang in the air ; they are connected with real objects.'[1] Ritschl would not have denied this. But we must remember also that everything is not given in the same way. The conception of the existence of God, for instance, cannot be reasoned about as a given fact in the same way in which we can reason about some phenomenon which confronts our senses in the world. Therefore, for Ritschl the value-judgments, besides being judgments which can be applied to existent things, are also judgments by means of which, starting from some given fact, we infer the real existence of some other fact. Value-judging, like metaphysical speculation, is thus a means of arriving at truth ; the Ritschlians reject the latter and cling to the former.

Thus, at the very outset, before entering into any detailed examination, we see reason to distrust the criticism which represents the Ritschlian value-judgments as mere subjective representations which never attain to objective validity. Such a subjective representation would be, in Dr. Orr's opinion, the idea of God, though, of course, he would not deny that Ritschl did conceive of the idea as no mere subjective

[1] Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, etc., p. 245.

representation. But Dr. Orr says, speaking of this theology, 'the idea of God is derived from man's need of securing his personality in relation to the world. It rests on a judgment of worth; but the worth is ultimately that of one's own personality. It is subjective in basis, and subjective in the manner in which the mind represents it to itself.'[1] This, however, does not give a correct impression of this particular value-judgment; this value-judgment is not constructed *in vacuo*, but from the given fact of man's personality, and the conditions in which he finds himself placed. And the fact of personality is not in the least a mere subjective impression. I cannot get outside my own personality and my own thoughts, but my personal existence is the most real thing of which I am conscious. Here, then, is a real element in the world, often at variance with the world, and if the idea of God is called in by a value-judgment to explain and secure it, this is no mere subjective representation, but a sober determination in accordance with and resulting from manifest realities. The method seems at least as respectable as that employed in the traditional metaphysical arguments. When applied to other things, for instance the life of Christ, value-judging ceases to be a means of establishing actual existence, for that is already given, but becomes, more strictly in accordance with the very word, the value or worth put on that life in order that a true view may be taken of His Person. Value-judging is for the Ritschlians, in fact, the right means for understanding history and grasping its supernatural significance.

[1] Orr, *Ritschlianism, Critical and Expository Lectures*, pp. 108-109.

A short account must now be given of Ritschl's statement on value-judgments and of the way he distinguishes them from theoretical judgments. The distinction between the two is found by him in the sphere of the subject. Now the basal function of the mind is feeling, and in feeling the mind decides with regard to the effect of external sensations upon itself. But the mind is also capable of ideas, and by these judges a sensation in respect of its cause, its connection with other causes, and so on till a scientific judgment becomes possible. But even these scientific judgments cannot be wholly detached from considerations of pleasure or pain, that is, from a consideration of the value which the object has to the thinking subject. Therefore, even when the attempt is made to regard the object exclusively as it exists in its own nature, value-judging cannot be eliminated, and Ritschl gives it the name of concomitant value-judging. With value-judgments of this character Ritschl contrasts independent value-judgments which arise in cases of moral perception where the whole question is one of the moral feelings excited in the subject. Of religious knowledge he says that it ' moves in independent value-judgments, which relate to man's attitude to the world, and call forth feelings of pleasure or pain, in which man either enjoys the dominion over the world vouchsafed him by God, or feels grievously the lack of God's help to that end.' [1] In Christianity the moral and religious value-judgments are most closely connected because faith in God and salvation from the world through Him are not to be separated from the moral task of realising the Kingdom of God, so that Feuerbach was wrong in

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 205. (E. T.)

thinking that Christianity put before its adherents interests of a purely egoistic kind. We may give one further quotation from Ritschl: 'In Christianity, religious knowledge consists in independent value-judgments, inasmuch as it deals with the relation between the blessedness which is assured by God and sought by man, and the whole of the world which God has created and rules in harmony with His final end.'[1]

Such is the account which Ritschl gives of the relation of theoretical to religious knowledge and of the value-judgments of religion. Before going further it will be convenient here to see whether the charge of dualism brought against it is justified. Dr. Orr speaks of 'the untenable dualism which Ritschl sets up.'[2] M. Schoen declares that 'dualism runs through all his theology. . . . We have two kinds of judgments, two kinds of truths, and two ways of knowing these and those.'[3] Now it is undoubtedly the case that Ritschl distinguishes sharply between the scientific and the religious method of arriving at truth, and also that for him a religious truth is something different from a scientific truth, but he is not dualistic in the sense of declaring that a thing may be true, *i.e.* consonant with objective reality, in one sphere and false in another, and that there is no possibility of subordinating one sphere to another. When Herrmann declares that to the Christian theologian it is a matter of indifference whether philosophy is theistic or pantheistic or materialistic, he does not mean that if philosophy necessarily led to an atheistic world-view, there would be no way of

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 207. (E. T.)
[2] Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, etc., p. 242.
[3] Schoen, *Les Origines historiques de la Théologie de Ritschl*, p. 33.

deciding between this and the Christian world-view; on the contrary, he would declare that philosophy had not at hand weapons capable of arriving at a true world-view, and that the philosophical world-view must be subordinated to that gained through Christianity. The Ritschlian position may be illustrated by the analysis of Dr. Ormond, the American philosopher, who, from an independent standpoint, arrives at very similar conclusions. He distinguishes in his work on *The Concepts of Philosophy* between judgments of knowledge and judgments of belief. In the former there is a coerciveness due to the possibility of immediate presentation or rational necessity, so that the judgment is valid for any rational being in relation to the truth it predicates. In judgments of belief, on the other hand, there are three stages : in the first stage the strongest practical motive for the affirmation of a belief agrees with the strongest possible rational and moral evidence short of conviction ; in the second stage the theoretical reasons for the endorsement of a belief, where practical motives are very strong, are formally less complete ; while in the third stage theoretical evidence is completely lacking, and a judgment is induced by practical motives alone.[1] If this attitude be termed dualistic, it is not so in the sense of dividing the mind against itself. Objective truth must be one, but there is a plurality of ways in which man may arrive at that truth.

Here we may recall the fact that value-judging as a method of arriving at truth was not invented by Ritschl for his own theological purposes, but in conception, though not in word, had a considerable history, so that

[1] Ormond, *The Concepts of Philosophy*, pp. 119-136, 704-714.

the way was being gradually prepared for Ritschl's usage. Otto Ritschl, in his pamphlet on the subject, traces back value-judging on its religious side to Luther, who declared that the Christian must import personal conviction into his beliefs in order to make them real, and on its philosophical side to Kant, for whose world-view the decisive thing was the worth of men and of the things in the world. In Otto Ritschl's sketch of pre-Ritschlian tendencies we may note as especially instructive Rothe's remark that we know with the feeling as well as with the understanding, and that transcendental objects and things of the utmost importance are for the great majority of men part of their knowledge through feeling rather than through thinking :[1] a remark which carries us back to Pascal's saying that the heart has its reasons. With Albrecht Ritschl's theory we have already dealt, but of Herrmann's conception a good description is given by Ritschl's son, which we proceed to quote. 'In Herrmann,' he writes, 'we find on the one hand the Kantian thought of man's worth as reckoned superior to all nature, which comes to consciousness for him in a feeling of value, that is, in a feeling of his own value. On the other hand, Herrmann has further value-judgments grounded in this self-feeling of man, on account of which judgments definite things are established as real entirely on account of their value. Thus, according to his meaning, 'the valuation of the religious object is rooted simply in a determined energy of self-feeling.' But the objectivity of the objects of faith themselves rests on the fact of the Person of Jesus and His relation to the needs of the moral human spirit.'[2]

[1] O. Ritschl, *Ueber Werthurtheile*, p. 9. [2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 11-12

Ritschl asserts, and he is supported in his view by his son, that a religious judgment is a value-judgment, and, as value-judgments are intended by them to deal with existences, not with non-existences, these two thinkers make one synthetical judgment out of the religious value-judgment and the so-called theoretical judgment of existence. Kaftan has treated the question differently; in his work *Das Wesen der christlichen Religion* he affirms that value-judgments are the basis of religious judgments, but that these themselves are theoretical propositions; at the same time, as he declared in a later article, his divergence from Ritschl is in mode of expression rather than in principle. A statement of some religious truth may be expressed in a theoretical proposition; yet, if it rests upon a judgment of value, it can only get beyond subjective representation if the value-judgment itself is able to do the same.

There is nothing in the Ritschlian system which has been more fiercely attacked than the use made of value-judgments. Hostile critics have declared that this principle necessarily leads to the most extreme subjective idealism and to the world of faith being deprived of its reality, so that all theology and religion is lost, as Stählin puts it, in illusions and phantasmagorias. Writing from the liberal side, Biedermann and Pfleiderer, while allowing the place of value-judging, declare that value can only be attached to an object or conception if, previously, the individual has attained to a knowledge of their objective truth. Dr. Orr has urged the same objection; 'judgments of value,' he says, 'do *not* exhaust our whole knowledge of God and of Christ, and are not incompatible with true theoretic

judgments regarding them. Before we can state anything in terms of religious value about God, we must have some means of assuring ourselves that God *is*—that He is a being of such and such character—that He acts in such and such a way. If we *know* this, then our statements have an objective as well as a subjective validity—they represent reality, and are not judgments of value only. Similarly we must know Christ historically in order to be able to recognise in Him, or be able to attribute to Him, the religious value He possesses. . . . The religious value which God and Christ have to us depends on what God and Christ *are*, and even for the immediate wants of religion—much more for the purposes of theology—this cannot be profitably left in the vague indeterminateness of feeling.'[1] And he describes the difference between the evangelical faith and Ritschlianism under this head by saying that 'the former takes its religious affirmations throughout seriously as the expression of objective reality; the latter leaves us always in uncertainty as to how much is to be discounted as mere subjective representation.'[2] Of course Dr. Orr does not intend to suggest that Ritschl and his followers do not regard God, Christ, revelation, and the facts of religion generally as objective realities, but he denies that the principles of the School strictly allow them to advance so far. At the same time, Dr. Orr and Dr. Denney do contend that some truths which the Ritschlians assert as value-judgments have for the Ritschlians themselves no objective reality, and that in the value-judgments they affirm what their theoretical thought, from which

[1] Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith*, p. 247.
[2] Orr, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-250.

they, like others, are unable to get free, denies. This, it is urged, is the true state of the case when the Ritschlians speak of the Godhead of Christ, of guilt, of forgiveness, and other Christian conceptions.

In discussing the Ritschlian epistemology we saw how Ritschl and his disciples distrust all attempts to arrive at the essence of the thing-in-itself, at rest and apart from its activities; in other words, they try to relate as closely as possible the thing and the person who is dealing with it by an insistence on all its practical effects upon him, so that thereby he may be able to form a true opinion about it. This is the experimental method, and it is clear that it has over the speculative methods of arriving at truth this advantage —that it brings into play more faculties of the human personality and therefore is able to make its deductions in accordance with the effect of the phenomenon upon the whole man. This is the method followed in value-judging, and certainly it does not appear *primâ facie* useless for the apprehension of truth. Dr. Orr is quite right in his contention that the Ritschlian system of value-judging must mean more than that 'knowledge of spiritual truth is morally and spiritually conditioned.'[1] But Dr. Orr's remarks seem to show that he has not understood the anxiety of the Ritschlians, an anxiety which we all ought to share, to get the stages of knowledge into the right order. If we know what God and Christ essentially are, it is not very difficult to value them aright, but the whole question is how we are to arrive at the knowledge of what God and Christ essentially are, how in fact we can make any approach towards such knowledge. To consider for a moment

[1] Orr, *Ritschlianism, Critical and Expository Lectures*, p. 83.

the doctrine of the Person of Christ; here Dr. Orr charges Ritschlianism with asking us to value as God 'one who is not God in fact;'[1] again he asks, 'Dare we apply this term "Godhead" in any metaphorical sense to one who essentially is *not* God?'[2] Similarly Professor Denney, speaking of the Ritschlians, says that 'though Jesus has for the Christian consciousness the religious value of God, He has for the scientific consciousness only the common real value of man.'[3] Now it must be remarked that these critics are not merely saying that the Ritschlian theory of knowledge does not allow of a satisfactory doctrine of Christ's Deity; if that were all, the present writer would in no way dissent, for he is convinced that for the construction of that doctrine the category of essence must be utilised far more boldly than is customary in the Ritschlian School; but it is implied that Ritschl, though speaking of Christ's Godhead, yet really thought of Him as essentially man. But to say that Ritschl thought of Christ as essentially not God is to represent him as using a category 'essence' from which he steadily refrained. Surely it is extravagant to imagine that Ritschl, after valuing Christ as God in what was for him the highest category —that of will, was so utterly untrue to his principles as to value Him as less than God in the lower category of substance, and, in his theology, to subordinate his value of Christ in the higher category to his thought of Christ in the lower. Ritschl can be found guilty only if a theory of knowledge—that we can know the thing-

[1] Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, etc., p. 263.
[2] Orr, *Ritschlianism*, etc., p. 47.
[3] Denney, *Studies in Theology*, p. 14.

in-itself—is ascribed to him, a theory which he combats more fiercely than any other philosophical view. We have no right to impute to Ritschl and his followers a metaphysical view of the Godhead and Christ's place therein, as the Unitarian view is equally with the Catholic, which contradicts both their determination to have nothing to do with questions of substance, and also the value they have placed upon Christ in another category. The Ritschlians, like others, found themselves face to face with Jesus as an historical character, and for them the supreme question was how they should think of Him. Surely Ritschl is absolutely right ideally, in saying that we know what Christ is by discovering His value for us, and this we discover by close attention to the historical life of Christ as seen in the Gospels, and by connecting that with our own moral needs. The Ritschlian method is pædagogic and inductive, but it is not a completely new phenomenon. The Apostles came to understand their Master more and more through growing appreciation of His unique worth ; is not the supreme confession of faith narrated in the Gospels, St. Thomas's 'My Lord and my God,' something very near akin to a judgment of value ? And wherever Christian theology is built up in as close connection as possible with the earthly life of Jesus Christ, there something similar to the Ritschlian value-judging must come in.

That the propositions of faith are objectively true, that is, that value-judging has to do with real existences and not with mere subjective illusions, is confidently affirmed both by Otto Ritschl and by Reischle. 'To set in opposition to one another value-judgments and so-called existence-judgments,' writes the former, 'as

though the value-judgments expressed a non-existence, is a quite senseless misunderstanding of the thought-operations which take place in reality. For in value-judgments it is the person's intention to express, just as in theoretical judgments, only a matter of fact that is considered true.'[1] Reischle is equally positive : he says that it was never disputed by Ritschl and his disciples, who reckoned propositions of faith as value-judgments, that these propositions were existence-judgments, so that to argue against them on the contrary supposition is to fight against a ghost. Theoretical and value-judgments are not antithetical activities, but different modes of thoughts, so that the charge of dualism cannot justify itself ; and the content of the theoretical reason is ready to be submitted as material to the religious world-view.[2]

The object of a value-judgment has to do with the feeling and willing rather than with the intellectual side of our personality, and the importance we attach to value-judging will vary in proportion to the value we attach to the feeling and willing side of our nature. If then ' God is a postulate for the satisfaction of our moral need '[3] according to the Ritschlian view, we shall consider this an adequate or inadequate reason for believing in His existence according as we look upon our moral need as the most central and personal thing in our whole personality and necessarily determinative of our world-view, or, on the other hand, treat it purely empirically and give it no place in the construction of a theology. The majority of

[1] O. Ritschl, *Ueber Werthurtheile*, p. 22.
[2] Reischle, *Werturteile und Glaubensurteile*, pp. 88, 118, 119.
[3] Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, etc., p. 248.

people would probably agree with Herrmann and Dr. Forsyth that the riddle of the world is much more a moral than an intellectual one ; while most Christians would assent to the former when he says, 'the riddle is the practical fettering of the moral being of man by the world ;[1] its solution is the practical release of that moral being by God despite all the world' ; and to the latter when he declares that, 'Christ approves Himself as a reality by His revolutionary, causal, creative action on that inmost reality whereby man is man.'[2] Reischle gives expression to the same thought in his statement that 'the strength with which the consciousness of the value of the morally good rules in us breaks forth in postulates of the moral consciousness. And according as I am determined to live conformably to my conscience and to strive in the world for the realisation of good, I must be convinced that this striving is not lost, but that the good is the final purpose of the world, and, therefore, must finally maintain its right against all opposition.'[3] Elsewhere he speaks of the inextricable connection of the religious and moral which is reached in Christianity, and contrasts the satisfaction Christianity gives to the moral part of our nature with the deadening influence upon man's faculties, the annihilation of his moral personality, which is the result of pessimistic world-views.[4] In this respect at least the Ritschlians have brought into prominence an apologetic of the utmost value, which, as a rule, is not

[1] Herrmann, *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie*, p. 11.

[2] Forsyth, Article in *Hibbert Journal*, vol. vi. No. 3, p. 492: 'The Distinctive Thing in Christian Experience.'

[3] Reischle, *Werturfeile und Glaubensurteile*, p. 69.

[4] Reischle, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

sufficiently pressed. The deepest desire of men and women, who try to understand themselves rightly, and at the same time see the world as it is, is that the moral should triumph both in themselves and in the world. If good and bad are the ultimate distinctions, then the thought becomes intolerable that after all, in the end, the good may go down and the bad prevail. It is no mere sentimental wish, no desire to see things in the pleasantest light possible, which makes a man revolt against the possibility of such an occurrence. For, if such an event is possible, then the world becomes a mockery and a mirage, and man himself is utterly deceived in what he knows to be the profoundest and noblest instincts of his heart and soul. Then Schopenhauer's words would be true : 'Well for those who have no consciousness of existence. The life of the animal is more to be envied than that of man ; the life of the plant is better than that of the fish in the water, or even of the oyster on the rock. Non-being is better than being, and unconsciousness is the blessedness of what does exist. The best would be if all existence were annihilated.'[1] But against such a view of man, rooted in the deepest despair, man's very common-sense, besides the consciousness of the inherent dignity of personal life, rebels. Yet with what justification can he rebel unless he knows that the final victory of the good, the final vindication of his hope are assured through good being not merely present in the world, but transcendent, all-powerful over it ? Here is no will-worship which affirms what it pleases, but the sanest and profoundest effort to grasp all that is implied in the distinction of good from

[1] Quoted in Orr, *Christian View of God and the World*, p. 52.

evil ; and no greater certainty of God's existence can be won than through this effort, so characteristic of the Ritschlians, and of Herrmann in particular, and so entirely praiseworthy.[1]

The Ritschlians are not content to leave the relation between the value-judgments of religion, especially the postulate of God, in this undeveloped though definite condition. Positive revelation is called in to supply whatever is lacking. Our moral need and our understanding of all that that implies can lead us to the personal conviction that God is, but for the content of the idea of God we must look to God's historic revelation in Christ. Ritschl was convinced that we know God and Christ only in their activities upon us, in their saving work, and that herein he was true to Luther's view ; but he was also convinced that in order to come into touch with these activities and see the goodness and power of God we must apply ourselves to a study of the historic life of Christ.[2] Ritschlianism never divorces the judgments of value from the objective historic revelation. Herrmann, in a passage just previous to the one quoted above (see p. 105), links together as firmly as possible man's moral position, which causes him to look for God to solve it, and the revelation given in history. He says, ' Our faith in God as our Father in Jesus Christ enables us no longer to value the world in such a way that it contradicts our personality, which is filled with so definitely moral a content, but so that it can be subordinated to our moral destination, our highest

[1] See Note D.

[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 212. (E. T.) Cf. Reischle, *Werturteile und Glaubensurteile*, p. 13.

good, as a means serving thereto. The problem of evil which points to our abandonment by God, is solved by our faith in His revelation in Christ.'[1] Reischle, who also has given attention to the same matter, quotes 1 John iv. 8 as a witness of the Christian consciousness to the fact that we do not construct our belief that God is Love from the strength of our inner need, but become certain of it through a real and powerful revelation of that love.[2] The intricacy of the connection is well brought out by Reischle in a further passage which we quote in full: 'This valuation (*i.e.* that in Christ the redeeming love of God is revealed) is brought about only on the ground of the moral consciousness; for the life into which Jesus Christ wishes to redeem us includes immediately the realisation of the Christian moral ideal through forgiveness and sanctification. Only in close connection with that arises also the impression of God's revelation in Jesus. But even the consideration of this point gives us no right to conceive of the propositions of faith as moral postulates; for we do not judge in them that God's holy love must be real, because it is so valuable for us that we might not and could not do without it; but much rather does God's love make itself known to us from its side as a reality: the appearance of Jesus Christ makes without effort the impression upon the conscience of divine dignity and love, and only upon that fundamental position does that valuation of Christ come into being on our side, together with the thymetic judgment that God is actively working in Him.

[1] Herrmann, *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie*, p. 11.
[2] Reischle, *Werturteile und Glaubensurteile*, pp. 101-102.

In Him do we, through our sense of value alone, point to the given historic appearance as divine revelation.' [1]

Reischle, it will be noticed, is very careful in his language, and, indeed, apart from differences in technical expressions, he does not go so far in his thought as other Ritschlians, who conclude more directly from man's moral need to the reality of God. A little further on he speaks of faith-judgments as 'judgments of confidence directed to the normative divine revelation.' [2] When Reischle wrote he had before him the numerous charges brought against the Ritschlian theology and the principle of value-judging by orthodox and liberals alike, and he was careful, by a proper use of terms, to show, not only that the School conceived of the objects of faith as real, for this was never questioned, but also that the method of apprehension of truth known as value-judging afforded no ground for the assertion that thereby the realities of faith were dissolved into illusions.

It is customary in works on Ritschlianism for the value-judgments to be discussed in a highly technical way. This may be desirable seeing that Herrmann was the first person to introduce the word into theological use,[3] and that Ritschl laid a stress upon it that was largely necessitated by his epistemology. But it should also be remembered that the word is one which is less and less used by theologians of the School. Kaftan has proposed to drop the word altogether,

[1] Reischle, *Werturteile und Glaubensurteile*, pp. 102-103.

[2] Reischle, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

[3] Herrmann, *Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit*, p. 80.

and it is not used by Herrmann in his later writings. But what it stands for—the recognition that proof cannot mean in theology exactly what it means in natural science, but that in theology knowledge must be a matter of personal conviction arising from individual experience—has not only found the fullest expression in the more recent writings of Kaftan and Herrmann, but has appeared with increasing prominence in the works of theologians and philosophers owning no allegiance to the name of Ritschl. It is the assertion of the presence of the personal element in all knowledge, the protest against excessive intellectualism, the understanding that truth is perhaps not quite so rigid and fixed as in our conceptions we have been inclined to represent it. How easily this is capable of abuse is apparent in the cruder pragmatism of the day, and in the almost complete separation between truths of faith and truths of fact made by some of the Roman Catholic Modernists. Yet, despite certain absurdities, the new movement has got more real affinity with the true conception of Christian faith than the old intellectualism which so largely resolved faith into an acceptance of the ideas of others. We may discard the word value-judging, but what there was of real truth in that word and idea still remains, and is closely attached to the true conception of faith. It is in the revival of that true conception, and in opposition to the orthodoxy and rationalism alike which had not grasped it, that the most valuable and fruitful work of the Ritschlians is to be sought. To this we may now turn our attention.

CHAPTER VI

THE RITSCHLIAN CONCEPTION OF FAITH

JUST as for every individual Christian the decisive thing is his faith, so every movement within the Christian Church can only hope to succeed in so far as its note of faith is true. This has always been the case ; very soon after the Lord's Ascension there was converted to the Church an individual who, grasping the true idea of faith as it has never been grasped since, has connected it inseparably with his name, for as long as Christianity remains so long will the great Pauline doctrine of justification by faith remain also. And the reply to all those who have accused the great Apostle of corrupting the Christian religion, and who would construct a simple Gospel of Jesus suitable for modern times and free from those alien elements which St. Paul, as they say, introduced, is to point to the fact, well brought out by Kaftan in his pamphlet *Jesus und Paulus*, that all the greatest moments in the spiritual history of Christianity have been due to the rediscovery of St. Paul. In the life and death struggle with Gnosticism it was through the agency of the Pauline letters that the fact became clear that Christianity was the religion of redemption and no mere natural religion with supernatural testimonies, as the Apologists had been inclined to think it ; it was to St.

Paul again that Augustine owed that strain of thought which, despite his full adherence to the orthodox dogmatic and his submission to Church authority, gives him an unique position among the Fathers of the Church ; and when worldliness and scholasticism had brought true religion very low within the mediæval Church, it was St. Paul with his conception of faith who was called in by Luther to redress the balance and justify the reforming movement.

The Church's debt to St. Paul is very great, but we must not think of it as though, in the New Testament, faith were prominent in his epistles alone, and had no equal importance attached to it elsewhere, especially in the Gospels. For the truth is that it is our Lord Himself Who first exalts faith as the great saving fact in a man's life. When He says to one of those whom He has healed, 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' He is not thinking merely of the recovery of physical health but of the presence of that in the man which responds to the things of God, and is able to recognise, and therefore receive, the divine grace. Faith in God, faith also in Himself because He is the Son of God, and reveals God to man, is what Jesus demands, a faith which is not the result of a determination on man's part to believe something quite strange to him, but arises from his experience that God works upon him. There are different aspects under which faith is regarded in the New Testament ; it is a gift of God to men (Eph. ii. 8 ; Phil. i. 29) ; it is firm conviction in the reality of the invisible (Heb. i. 1 ; 2 Cor. v. 7-8) ; it is a new inner life of man (John xvii. 3) ; but the overruling thought of all is the personal confidence in the personal God. The determination to assent to narratives and doctrines is not

the New Testament conception of faith; as St. Paul says, 'No man can call Jesus Lord save in the Holy Spirit,' that is, a real witness of man to the Lordship of Jesus is only possible where the heart has first been moved by the Spirit of God and so has grown capable of so tremendous a confession.

Yet even in the New Testament we find ideas present, which in their development were capable of transforming faith from confidence in the living God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, into assent to the formulated articles of a creed. These appear particularly in the pastoral epistles. It is in no way the present writer's wish to imply that assent to a creed is incompatible with true faith, but we do always need to remember that assent to a creed is not in itself true faith. The two are distinct and should be thought of as distinct: but too often, unfortunately, the distinction is lost sight of, and a mere barren orthodoxy takes the place of profound spiritual conviction; when this occurs all that is most vital in the New Testament presentation of faith, and in the Gospel which St. Paul preached, is lost.

The history of the early Church, with all its undoubted glories and triumphs, yet presents us with the saddening spectacle of the true conception of faith being more and more obscured by the growth of formal orthodoxy. We must recognise how difficult it was for the Church to avoid this danger, how essential it must have appeared that all the Church's members should think alike. We must recognise further that in the great controversies, especially those against the Gnostics and against Arianism, the very life of Christianity was at stake and compromise was impossible.

But the triumph of the Church could not be without loss to herself, nor was the loss a light one. Assent to the orthodox creed came to be considered far the most important duty of the Christian man, and living faith and piety declined. A Christianity of two standards, one for the priest or, still more, the monk, one for the layman—a thing utterly irreconcilable with the New Testament—began to grow up, and naturally became popular, while the whole development both of the most exact orthodoxy and of the hierarchical character of the Church culminated in the gigantic edifices of the scholastic theology and the mediæval Popedom. To all the evil of this development the key is to be found in the loss of the true conception of faith. Melanchthon's readiness to be at peace with the Church and the Pope, if only true faith might be preached in the Church, shows that this fact was obvious to the Reformers.

The true conception of faith was revived by Luther and the Reformers, and was that which enabled them to break away effectually from Rome and build up Churches in opposition to her. But the Reformers, though perfectly serious with their thought of faith, were not able to be consistent in it. In all the great Reformers the double note is clear—on the one hand, the conception of faith as free confidence in the gracious God Who forgives His people in Jesus Christ; on the other hand, the demand for subscription to an orthodox dogmatic, partly taken over from the Church of Rome, partly constructed in opposition to that Church. With the great leaders the dogmatic sprang directly from true faith, and was for them the necessary 'prius' to that redemption which they felt that God in Christ

had bestowed upon them. As Herrmann points out, Luther's enthusiasm for the orthodox Christological dogma was due to the fact that it expressed for him what he had actually found in Christ.[1] The double strain in Luther is clearly seen in his treatment of the Bible. The Bible was specially sacred for him, because in its pages he had found the Grace of God, which set him free from his fears and introduced him into a new life, and in accordance with this experience he rejected the epistle of St. James as an epistle of straw, which represented salvation as obtainable by works ; but equally in accordance with his experience he refused to argue with any one who did not admit the infallibility of Scripture, by the side of which, moreover, he set the Nicene Creed. Yet for Luther faith was neither assent to prescribed doctrines nor unquestioning confidence in the narratives of the Scriptures, since in that case it would be a work of man possible for Turks and heathens. 'True faith,' he says, 'cannot be made by our thoughts, but is purely a work of God in us, without any aid of ours.'[2] He explains the difference between this true faith and false faith : 'When faith is of the kind that God awakens and creates in the heart, then a man trusts in Christ ; yea, he is then so firmly founded upon Christ that he bids defiance to sin, death, hell, the devil, and all God's adversaries. . . . That is the nature of true faith, which is utterly unlike the faith of Sophists, Turks, and Jews ; for their faith simply lights upon a thing with human thoughts, accepts it, and believes that it is thus or so. But God has no dealings with such delusion ;

[1] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, pp. 146-147. (E. T.)

[2] Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

it is the work of man, and such delusion comes from nature, from the free-will of man, so that, possessing it, they can say and repeat after others : I believe that there is a God, that Christ was born, died, and rose again for me. But what such a faith is, how powerful it is, of this they know nothing.' [1]

Melanchthon is generally considered the founder of Lutheran orthodoxy, but in him also we find strong passages, asserting the importance of true faith as compared with mere assent to doctrine. He speaks of the necessity of our not only speculating on the divinity of the Son and the Spirit, but of practically trusting in Christ, and seeing the Spirit's divinity in His life-giving activities. 'In this invocation, in these exercises of faith,' he continues, 'we shall come to know the Trinity better than by disputing with useless speculations on what the Persons of the Trinity do among themselves, not what they do with us.' Similarly, speaking of the Person of Christ, he writes, 'This is to know Christ, even to know His benefits, not, as the scholastics teach, to speculate on His natures and the modes of His Incarnation. Unless you know for what purpose Christ took flesh and was nailed to the cross, what use will it have been to have known of His history ? '[2]

The notion of faith which was vital for the Reformers and was the moving cause of the fervour of their opposition to the Church of Rome, was not able to maintain itself unobscured. The Reformers themselves were not able to free themselves entirely from conceptions which belonged historically to the old

[1] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 219. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 392-396. (E. T.)

Catholicism, and which were taken over unchallenged into the new movement, while the very sincerity of the leaders' attachment to the old dogmatic as the necessary presupposition for their own religious experiences made them the more stringent in positing it as essential for all. The result was the construction of a Protestant orthodoxy which borrowed immensely from Catholicism and yet could never hope to attain to the imposing dignity of the Catholic system, because the true Protestant note of faith might appear at any moment with disastrous effects upon a strictly formulated theology. Even the 'two standards' of the old Catholicism threatened to reappear whenever the opinion began to prevail that, though ideally every Christian held all the particular dogmatic positions, yet, if that was impossible for him, there was some virtue in silence and in refusal to oppose them. The approximation of dogmatic Protestantism to the old Catholic view of faith and its divergence from the true thought of the Reformers is clearly seen in the insertion of *assensus* (assent), between *notitia* (knowledge), and *fiducia* (confidence), as a stage of faith. In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession nothing is said of a special assent to fact or doctrine as prior to confidence. All that is required for faith is the knowledge of the fact and trust in it, so that Herrmann is quite right in pointing out that 'the Reformers looked upon the ground of their faith as an unquestionable fact, which had by its very content the power to awaken the new life of faith in any man who became aware of it.' [1] The insertion of a special act of assent shows that faith is once more coming

[1] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 222. (E. T.)

round to mean belief in delivered doctrines, while the insertion of *assensus* makes *fiducia* also change its significance, and imply confidence in the divine doctrine which the Church is able to extract from the New Testament. If this represented the most central thoughts of the Reformers about faith, we should have to admit that Professor König, a distinguished Lutheran theologian, was right in maintaining that the Reformers' notion of faith was the same as that of the Roman Catholic Church.[1] Clearly, if faith is assent to narratives and doctrines reported or constructed by others, the character of faith is not changed by assent to the Scripture records being substituted for assent to the doctrines of the Church. The whole difference between the Romanist and the Reformed conceptions of faith then will lie merely in the different things believed or the amount believed. And even the traditional distinction between the Bible and the Church could not be preserved in the orthodox Protestant dogmatic, since, whatever might be asserted to the contrary, the eliciting of a systematised theology from the Holy Scriptures was a work of the utmost delicacy, only possible to competent theologians. The theology thus built up had to be taken on trust by the mass of the common people, though it was always assumed that they could verify it from the pages of Holy Scripture for themselves. Moreover, no instructed Catholic theologian would have dreamed of denying, in theory at least, the truth of this assumption, so that both in the old Catholicism and in the orthodox post-Reformation Protestantism

[1] Quoted in Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 222. (E. T.)

the singularly misleading formula 'The Church to teach, the Bible to prove' was constructively true. The weakness of orthodox Protestantism became obvious with the beginnings of Biblical criticism, for when the complete inerrancy of Scripture was first questioned, and then became more and more untenable, it was impossible for any sincere thinker to make assent to the narratives and doctrines of Scripture binding upon the Christian conscience. Luther had not based the truth of Christianity on the infallibility of the Bible at all in the same way as later Protestantism, which has, in practice, made this the foremost dogma of theology. Luther had found redemption in the Holy Scriptures because in them he had heard the Word of God, and in them had appeared to him with overwhelming might the redeeming, liberating Person of Jesus. The infallibility of the Bible can never be a fact of experience, but it was as nearly such for Luther as it has ever been for any man: the whole situation was changed when the infallibility of Scripture was made the basis of a systematic theology, being itself a dogma to which, from most men at least, a purely formal assent is all that can be expected. Accordingly, in the Churches of the Reformation, this use of the Bible tended to a fresh growth of the opinion that a man could gain faith and religion by combining certain thoughts with himself and thereby winning redemption. But if redemption is not a thought or a doctrine but an experienced fact, and faith is man's trust in the personal moral power which alone has authority over him, lack of faith cannot be lack of assent to one particular doctrine or another, but is the sin of

those who in the midst of difficulties lose confidence in God.[1] That Protestantism which prides itself on its orthodoxy has always presented a most unconvincing appearance on this point ; it has never been able to get so far away from true Reformation principles as to make saving faith a matter of assent to doctrines or narratives, but at the same time it has continually insisted, both explicitly and implicitly, that without such assent saving faith is very doubtful, if not absolutely impossible. This is simply to readmit all the force of a false conception of faith by another entrance, and could only be justified if it were able to be established beyond doubt that saving faith always leads on to such acknowledgment of doctrines, or that assent to these doctrines is the invariable prius of saving faith. Neither of these positions can be established ; the first assertion involves a *petitio principii*, and really demands the presence of doctrines in saving faith and not merely as an after-effect, for, if saving faith is obtained before the doctrines have been received as true, then clearly it is separable from them, and cannot be dependent on the attitude taken up to them ; on the other hand, to make assent to doctrines the presupposition for saving faith is to invert the true order, to endanger experimental faith, and to fall away from all that gave life to the Reformers' protest against the mediæval Church.

Nevertheless, we must not think it strange that Protestant orthodoxy lapsed more and more into the old conception of faith, nor must we hold it to have been without excuse. True faith is purely a matter for the individual, and no Church can guarantee

[1] Cf. Mark iv. 33-40.

or expect that all its members shall have attained to it. The relation of the Church as a whole to faith and creed must, however, be different from that of the individual, a fact which, as we shall see later, the Ritschlian theologians have not fully understood. The Church must bear witness not only to her faith, but also to the Object of her faith. The Church holds up before the world the picture of the Saviour, and while she must deal in all tenderness with those who, though they see in Jesus alone their Redeemer, yet cannot go on to make any confession of His Godhead, she cannot but proclaim her own conviction that, as Herrmann says, if the Godhead of Jesus were not true we should not have in Him a Saviour.[1] Unfortunately, orthodox Protestantism was not content to leave the matter thus, but went on to impose the most stringent dogmatic affirmations and great subtleties of distinction upon all its adherents. The inevitable consequence was that doctrinal correctness became divorced, as in pre-Reformation times, from true faith and moral sincerity. Men subjected themselves to the ideas of theologians, as formerly to the guidance of priests, without realising in the least ' that a determination to subject ourselves in matters of religion to the ideas of other people is not saving faith, but an act of that moral perversity from which God wants to save us.' [2] Besides this, the danger of antinomianism, which is always near at hand whenever ' through faith, not by works ' is misunderstood, increased immensely when faith was formalised

[1] Herrmann, *Worum handelt es sich, u.s.w.*, p. 13.

[2] Herrmann, *The Moral Law in Protestantism and Romanism*, p. 190. (E. T.)

into assent. Orthodox Protestantism seemed likely to repeat the faults of pre-Reformation Catholicism and add characteristic ones of its own.

Now from this conception of faith as assent to the divinely-delivered doctrine there have been two revolts, very different in nature. The first is distinctive of those theologians who wished to retain the notion of salvation by faith only as the mark of the Protestant Church, but, influenced by modern science and philosophy, adopted a thoroughly rationalistic attitude towards Christian doctrines. We may speak of them as 'Liberal Protestants.' They owed much to Kant and Schleiermacher, and in their turn influenced the Church for its health in many respects. There was a moral fearlessness about them, a readiness to face all facts, an insistence on faith as a free act of the individual and not a mere repetition of the thoughts and statements of others; but it must be confessed that their complete success would have resulted in an elimination from Christianity of all the elements which distinguished it from 'natural religion,' and in faith being dissolved into a vague feeling with no particular content. The other revolt was inaugurated by Ritschl, and his aim was to return genuinely to the Reformers, and especially to Luther, distinguishing carefully in their thought between that which gave birth and life to the movement, and that which they took over from Catholicism without any suspicion of possible inconsistency. The difference between Ritschl and the Liberals has been excellently put by Herrmann. 'What the Liberals wish to put in the place of this false faith is not Christian faith, but a religiousness which, in their view, is rooted

in the nature of the Christian soul. They do not understand that Christian faith is unconditional submission to a Power which a Christian distinguishes from his own inner life—that is, the Revelation of God. Of the two propositions—Faith saves a man, and, Faith is a submission to the authority of a revelation —they are willing to hold only the former. Ritschl maintained both.'[1] Herrmann leaves us in no doubt of his own agreement with Ritschl on this point. 'The birth-hour of our faith,' he says, 'has then first arrived when from the manifoldness of our life issues a fact, which by its content forces upon us the conviction that its presence in our existence is God's intervention in the same.'[2] Elsewhere he says that 'we can become conscious of a faith born within us as the work of God only if the root of that faith be the confidence by which we feel ourselves swayed by the appearance of Jesus. In such trust our own free-will breathes and acts, and yet we experience it as the doing and gift of One Who is stronger than we.'[3] The same conception appears in Kaftan's pamphlets, *Glaube und Dogma* ('Faith and Dogma') and *Brauchen wir ein neues Dogma?* ('Do we need a new Dogma?') While he rejects, equally with other members of the School, the idea that faith is the accepting on authority of certain propositions, he is quite as positive that faith is not the means by which a sense of peace and pleasure is assured for the subject. He never forgets that truth stands over against

[1] Herrmann, *Der Evangelische Gaube und die Theologie Albrecht Ritschls*, pp. 33-34. (E. T.)

[2] Herrmann, *Die Gewissheit des Glaubens und die Freiheit der Theologie*, p. 49.

[3] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 229. (E. T.)

faith as an authority, and that it is faith's duty to discover the truth and to be obedient to it. In any doctrinal reconstruction the perception that faith is before all things trust, must, in Kaftan's view, hold the central position.

In his pamphlet *Why does our Faith need Historical Facts?* Herrmann has some fine and inspiring thoughts on the connection between faith and morals. The moral law is pædagogic; it leads to faith, and faith in its turn places the individual in a different relation to the law. It is 'submission under some moral necessity which makes the soul free,'[1] and the man who finds this true of himself stands on the threshold of Christian faith. The moral law ceases to be a mere external authority; it becomes the expression of man's own will. Herrmann's pages show us how in Christian faith the claims of authority and freedom meet and are satisfied, how, also, faith and moral activity can never be separated. Popular Evangelical Pietism has often been inclined to depreciate 'mere morality' in the supposed interests of faith. Nothing could well be more unfortunate. If faith is not understood ethically it can have no permanent existence. If the moral law is of God, then a recognition of its insurmountable claims is a response to God's demand, a step towards faith. The will that is set to do the good is the same will before and after the advent of faith; only in the latter case it is conscious of its own root and direction—God's will, and His final purpose, the establishment of His Kingdom.

Yet, however great be faith's certainty, it still

[1] Herrmann, *Warum bedarf unser Glaube geschichtlicher Thatsachen?* p. 24.

remains true that faith is not knowledge but is related to knowledge. The nature of this relation has been presented by Herrmann and Kaftan; they come to very similar conclusions, but it appears to the present writer that Kaftan's treatment of the question is more satisfactory and more helpful for dogmatic reconstruction. Herrmann is certainly right in maintaining that the faith which conquers the world cannot grow out of the world, and scientific knowledge of the world. He also asserts that, when once faith is understood as communion with God and the recognition of a wonderful fact, the road to knowledge is open for theology;[1] but it cannot be said that Herrmann himself helps us much along this road. Theology's freedom from the bonds of scientific knowledge is a much more common theme with him[2] than the actual knowledge to which a theology founded on a true perception of faith leads. The truth is that Herrmann is not really a dogmatic or systematic theologian. He has grasped so entirely the fact that knowledge is a matter of personal conviction that it is not in the least natural to him to build up an imposing dogmatic edifice, and present it to others for their acceptance or rejection. The all-transcending fact of the Person of Jesus so fills his thought that, while he sees the inability of scientific knowledge working by its own methods to convince men of the significance of the fact, he does not care to use that fact to any great extent as a starting-point for further deductions: he leaves it in almost complete isolation, and we may freely admit that his method adds to its

[1] Herrmann, *Die Gewissheit des Glaubens, u.s.w.*, pp. 7, 19.
[2] Cf. Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

impressiveness. But if systematic theology is to exist at all, there must be a more adequate account of the connection of faith with external truths or dogmas. The Ritschlian School is dissatisfied with the old dogmatic, but it is not in the least an anti-dogmatic School: the briefest perusal of Ritschl's *Justification and Reconciliation* will leave no doubt of that. Herrmann does not need to be convinced of the objectivity and importance of the truths of religion. Kaftan, however, will give us more help; he contrives to be more detached than Herrmann; the signs of interest in pure intellectual investigation are more noticeable in him; he realises more effectually the necessity of a new and true dogmatic for Christianity. His pamphlet *Faith and Dogma* is a reply to Dreyer's plea for an undogmatic Christianity, and in it he makes his meaning clear. 'Faith, according to the New Testament,' he writes, 'is not principally a holding-for-true, but confidence in God and His grace. . . . But faith includes the *thought*, the thought of God and of its relation to Him.'[1] Thus faith and thought are inextricably bound up together. Hence we can speak of thoughts of faith, and knowledge of faith. And this knowledge of faith is the knowledge of a personal God Who is the highest energy of personal will, so that apart from this common thought of God Christian faith could not exist. Though God transcends our thoughts, yet is He in line with our thoughts.[2] Further on Kaftan insists most strongly on the intense importance to faith that it should deal with true knowledge.

[1] Kaftan, *Glaube und Dogma*, p. 22.
[2] Kaftan, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

He points out that life is a matter of stern realities, and that the only faith adequate to it is the faith which knows the truth; moreover, the truth which faith possesses is the only truth which there is in these things, for knowledge apart from faith has no path to God, and there cannot be a double truth.[1] Kaftan's objection to the old dogmatic does not lie in the fact that its creators bound faith and knowledge together; on the contrary, he sides with them against all those who would construct a theology out of world-knowledge and in independence of faith; only he cannot assent to the kind of unity found in the old dogmas, since there, too, there was an unsatisfactory mixture of the thoughts of science or philosophy and the thoughts of faith. The more important the things are with which it is concerned, the more does knowledge take on the character of personal conviction, as we have to draw increasingly upon our own experience and knowledge. This is specially so in religion, where faith alone can reach to God.[2] Here we find Kaftan coming extremely close to Herrmann's point of view, but Kaftan has ever in mind the need for a new dogma to replace the old, a new dogma which true faith can grasp and which shall have the authority of truth. Kaftan's second pamphlet *Do we need a new Dogma?* expands this theme and applies his principles to the central question of Christianity—the Person of Christ. It is characteristic of Kaftan that, though he is in thorough agreement with the main aims of the School, he yet is able to show himself in closer touch than other Ritschlians with the work of all

[1] Kaftan, *Glaube und Dogma*, pp. 47-52.
[2] Kaftan, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

Christian theology. In studying his work the reader is conscious that the task of presenting the Gospel in a form that is the result of intellectual inquiry, and can justify itself to intellectual scrutiny, is one whose importance Kaftan fully realises.

That Justification is by faith alone is a truth which the Christian Church can never surrender. But it must be admitted that the formulated expression is often only a piece of lip-service, not to be taken too seriously when the problem of man's salvation is dealt with. These are not days when the Pauline or, for the matter of that, the Gospel conception of faith is greatly glorified. For in the Gospels and the Epistles faith is everything, not in the sense that faith is something exclusive, self-centred, unproductive, but in the sense that he who has faith has all else besides. In other words, faith is not a means, it is an end ; it is not the way to salvation, but salvation itself. To-day faith is far too frequently viewed as a mere medium between the soul and salvation ; faith is the first step, but it is not, even here on earth, the last. It is in the activities of good works, in devout reception of the sacraments, in progressive holiness, that salvation is really to be sought ; this at least seems to be the creed of much of the religion of the time. Let us by all means exalt the sacraments and good works, let us insist on ' social service ' from the Church, let us see that ' lives ' as well as ' souls ' are saved :—but we must keep the due proportion of faith. And it is untrue to the New Testament to make faith a mere stepping-stone to higher things. Faith in the New Testament is that which saves, redeems, renews, and by it the world is conquered, and the will is established in a righteous

way. Within the Church and without, by orthodox and liberals, by Catholics and Evangelicals, the true nature and quality of faith is often misunderstood to-day. Implications may be read into the idea of faith, which have no rightful place there, or faith may be pushed from off its rightful throne and its especial honour taken from it. Against all such errors the Ritschlian School has stood firm ; it has recognised the unique place of faith in the Christian scheme, it has seen in faith a veritable sacrament of redemption which it both represents and is. For this we must thank them ; however serious may be their failings elsewhere, we can forgive much to those who recall the Church to the New Testament conception of faith, to an understanding of all the power which was possessed by men and women for whom that idea was the inspiration of their lives.

We have spoken above of the fact that the Ritschlians have not made any adequate distinction between the attitude of the individual and the attitude of the Church to faith and dogma.[1] This is a misfortune, and we cannot but criticise them in it. Herrmann has treated the question with characteristic boldness, but his dread of any imposition of doctrines on men's minds by an authority has prevented him from doing real justice to the Church's need for a positive authoritative dogmatic ; authoritative not in the sense that the Church as a final authority, or relying on the words of Scripture as a final authority, presents this doctrine or that to all who would attach themselves to her, but in the sense that she is conscious of the sole source of her power, and cannot but continue to bear

[1] See Note E.

witness to her own salvation and to refuse all support, even to anathematise, ideas which must, ultimately, tend to subvert herself and her Gospel. Herrmann is as far removed as possible from the ordinary undogmatic Christian, but his immense feeling of the evil effects of a misused authority and of a perverted notion of faith causes him to allow the note of appeal in the Church's message to predominate unduly over the note of convinced testimony. He will not go further than to say that the Christian knowledge of the past should be 'put forward as the expression of the inner world in which believers have lived,' so that we may tell Christians 'that they, too, will some day grow up to the comprehension of such things if only each in his special situation exercises a right faith.'[1] We shall agree with Herrmann that the kind of demand often made by the Church in the past, and still, at times, now, that her members shall hold for true all that is told us in the Bible, or all that she has declared in her Councils, is a demand which she ought not to make, and cannot enforce, but, on the other hand, we shall be prepared to assert, where Herrmann is silent, that, though we do not dare to speak of any article of a creed as *articulus aut stantis aut cadentis hominis*, since God alone knows enough to judge of our neighbour's spiritual state, yet we can and must speak of certain articles of faith as *articuli aut stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*. For the Church's duty is, not to enunciate moral truths, but to preach the Gospel, and a Gospel is an impossibility without dogma. If Herrmann's ideal could be realised, there would doubtless be no need

[1] Herrmann, *The Evangelical Faith and the Theology of Albrecht Ritschl*, p. 50. (E. T.)

for a Church dogma, since every Christian would be in the fullest sense a believer, standing in the power of his own God-awakened faith, but the majority of Christians fall far short of the ideal, and for them the positive dogmatic is of the greatest value as a sign to imperfect faith. They may mistake an assent to this dogmatic for Christian faith; this is the obvious danger which the very existence of such a dogmatic entails; but this is far less serious than that they should be in danger, through lack of guidance by the Church, of falling right away from contact with the Gospel. Faith is not simple, but complex, of many varieties, and however imperfect it be, however much it may misconceive itself, it merits the tenderness of treatment which wise teachers show to a child's limited ideals and outlook. The Church therefore, as a Church, cannot decline to say whether for her Jesus is or is not merely a man like other men. Any such refusal on her part would be the deathblow to the struggling, incipient, confused faith of thousands. It is bad that men should believe in the Deity of Jesus simply because the Church says so; but the witness of the Church may and does help them on to discover for themselves the truth of this dogma; the very fact that the Church of Rome has never lacked Christian saints proves this: but if the Church were to lower her flag and were to proclaim no longer *in hoc signo vinces*, myriads who were beginning to breast the steep ascent of Christian faith would sink back, baffled and befogged, into the despair of agnosticism or the futility of humanitarian religion.

Kaftan is explicit on the need of a dogma for the Church. 'What holds the Church together,' he writes,

'and binds its members to one another is, before all else, faith. And indeed the common faith. *This* faith must be proclaimed, in *this* faith must the growing members of the Church be instructed. There is also no Christian Church which has not a rule, in accordance with the proclamation and teaching of which it must direct itself; none also in which this rule does not present itself as teaching. And this teaching is its dogma.'[1] Just as Herrmann sees the importance of a true conception of faith if Roman Catholicism is to be successfully opposed, so does Kaftan grasp the necessity of teaching and dogma for the Reformation Churches. Faith indeed is everything for Kaftan just as for Herrmann, but Kaftan is ever conscious of truth standing over against faith as an authority, and is ever anxious for the appearance of a true dogmatic in vital relation to true faith. How far the suggestions which he offers contributory to a new dogma are adequate is another matter; it is the principle involved in his argument for some dogma which is of value.

We are almost in a position to consider the systematised theology of the Ritschlian School. But even now we have not quite finished with the experimental side of Ritschlianism: there still remains the question how, if at all, man at present can have direct communion with God. Faith in God and communion with God have always been thought of as near akin; they have not, however, as a rule been looked upon as identical. Our next chapter will be devoted to an investigation of the Ritschlian conception of man's present communion with God, and to an attempt to understand how far the Ritschlians are opposed

[1] Kaftan, *Glaube und Dogma*, p. 26.

to all mysticism, and what is involved in the opposition which does exist.[1]

[1] The present writer is conscious that many might consider it premature to deal with the attitude of the School to the problem covered by the term 'mysticism' before the dogmatic position of the School has been set forth. The Ritschlian dogma is, however, so largely the result of all the meaning which man through his manifold needs and religious experiences finds in God, that he has thought it best to keep the dogmatic problem to the end. At the same time, he may anticipate a little here by expressing his belief that the Ritschlians' dogmatic has unjustifiably restricted the sphere within which man's communion with God moves. It is, of course, quite impossible to set up any impenetrable barrier between experimental religion and systematic theology.

CHAPTER VII

THE RITSCHLIAN CONCEPTION OF MAN'S COMMUNION WITH GOD

MAN asks from his religion, above all else, the power to come into the closest possible touch with God, to have communion with God. Before we can concentrate our attention on what the Ritschlian theologians have said concerning this great matter, we must try and understand a little more of the problems involved, and see what solutions have been offered in the past. And we may begin by subjecting this very idea 'communion' to our scrutiny.

We know what we mean by communion or intercourse with our fellow-men. By the written word, by word of mouth, even by the silent touch or look, a man enters into relations with his fellow. The one mind acts and reacts upon the other; it gives and receives; it is influenced much or little: the whole personality may be changed by contact with another, whether for better or worse. Moreover, different influences may even divide the mind in two against itself, so that all personal harmony vanishes. It is, in fact, hardly possible to overestimate the importance of the influence one person may exercise over another, and when we think of this we shall be inclined to come to the conclusion that people

are anything but impervious spiritual atoms, that personality, in fact, is so absolutely fluid a thing, that any form of philosophical individualism must prove quite unable to maintain itself.

But this is only one side of the question. We do indeed know by experience how great is the force which personality can exercise upon personality, and from this experience we make our deductions. There is, however, another experience as valid and even more powerful than the former: amid all the changes which affect us, even in the most inmost recesses of our being, we are always conscious—except in quite extraordinary psychological cases which cannot be held to invalidate the general rule—of the continued identity of our own personality. However much I may be influenced by others, my ego remains ever the same, and ever distinct from other egos. The mind doubts, and is divided and distraught within its own limits; it never makes the very smallest movement towards forming a metaphysical unity with another mind. If we fix our attention on this experience, which is far more genuinely metaphysical than the former one, we shall agree with Professor Pringle-Pattison that 'each self is an unique existence, which is perfectly impervious to other selves.' We may say this without any prejudice to that sense of fuller social union, which, of late years, has done so much to break down the walls of an individualism which made its metaphysical theory regulative also for ethics. Professor Caldecott, in his essay on 'Philosophy and the Being of God,' while denying to the claims of Sociality no iota of its due, and while bringing out clearly all the results

that flow from '"intersubjective" intercourse,' declares that 'consciousness is seated in individuals, in centres: these are inaccessible to one another: each of us stands within his own circle, others are *to* him.'[1] Our relations with others are therefore purely ethical and affectional; we never pass beyond this; however powerful be the ties which bind us to others, however many years have gone to their strengthening, we must remain in the same position as regards the consciousness of any other person. All the knowledge I have of my friend's consciousness I do but infer from the intersubjective intercourse which has passed between us; the inferences may grow more and more certain, but they remain inferences: more immediate knowledge there cannot be, for what is spoken of as intuitional knowledge is nothing but a chain of inferences in which the intermediate links are omitted by the thinking subject, and are not present to his active consciousness.

From man's communion with his fellow-men we pass to a consideration of man's communion with God. Despite the great gulf which separates man from God, there is one fundamental resemblance between man and God, a resemblance of which in this particular question we must take full account. Of God as well as of man we predicate personality. We shall, of course, admit that, even with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity altogether omitted, personality in God must be something infinitely larger and greater than personality in man. Yet at this point we wish to insist on the likeness rather than the difference, on the fact that all Theism sees in God a personal

[1] Caldecott, in *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 120.

Spirit, not an impersonal force, that God is Father over us before He is Spirit within us, that His immanence in the world is secondary, His transcendence above it primary. If we keep along the lines of this thought of God we shall not seek to express man's relation to and intercourse with God in terms of mystical union : it will be in the conforming of man's will to the will of God that the end of human existence here will be looked for ; prayer will have its own proper place, but it will be prayer in which the human spirit petitions for the outpouring of strength from God, strength that shall lead to the fuller accomplishment of God's will, rather than prayer in which the human spirit strives to lose itself in the divine, prayer regarded above all as contemplation.

Such, briefly, is the unmystical view of man's communion with God. It must not be thought of as involving a lack of genuine religious experience. Just as a man has experience of another person though he cannot merge himself in him, so may man have experience of the divine, personal Spirit without any fusion of the human personality with the personality of God. But we must remember two facts, first, that whenever religion has been turned into a religious moralism, and the presence of God in the soul has been lost sight of, spiritual barrenness has often resulted, as in the religion of the eighteenth century, whether orthodox or deistic : and in the second place, full justice is not done to the New Testament, which contains too many and too strong expressions tending in the direction of religious mysticism for them to be treated as merely metaphorical.

Let us look at the mystical view. Relying on a fluid conception of human personality, and rejecting as inadequate a mere ethical agreement of man's will with the will of God, mysticism has always striven to pass beyond moral harmony to something much more akin to unity of nature. The likenesses between God and man are insisted on rather than the differences, and even among those Christian mystics who have not been able to forget that Christianity is primarily the religion of redemption, the redemption wrought on Calvary has been regarded as a preliminary to the fuller practical redemption which comes to a man when within his own soul he meets his Lord. It is the conception of the indwelling of Christ or the Holy Spirit within the soul—we need not here go into the question of the distinctions drawn in this matter—that is fundamental for mysticism. 'Christ for us' leads on to and is subordinate to 'Christ in us.' The 'Athanasian' definition of the Incarnation, 'the taking of the manhood into God,' is made regulative for human nature as a whole, so that since the Incarnation the deification of human nature is the goal to be looked for. The influence of Neo-platonism meets with expressions—and more than expressions—drawn from St. John and St. Paul, and hence has been formed a Christian mysticism, which has never lacked devoted adherents, which has been found alike in Catholicism and Protestantism, and has kept alive the transforming power of Christianity in times when too great an insistence on prescribed forms, whether in doctrine or the 'cultus,' has threatened to sterilise true religion. However much we may be conscious of the dangers of mysticism, its tendency in theology to pantheism, and

in ethics to an inadequate sense of sin, we must grant that there is a side of New Testament teaching to which mysticism attempts to do full justice. This is overlooked by thinkers like Ritschl, who would see in Christian mysticism nothing but a barely Christianised Neo-platonism. It is not unfair to say that Ritschl is an entirely unreliable guide in any interpretation of a New Testament passage, which points in the direction of mystical union. His assertion that St. John xvii. 4 has no reference to anything but an ethical unity is an illustration of this.[1] Their dislike of all 'natural theology' keeps the Ritschlian theologians from attaching any weight to the presence of a mystical element in all the higher religions as exemplified by the Greek mysteries, by Roman Stoicism, where it is the more noteworthy owing to the pre-eminently ethical character of the system, by the loftiest Hindu thinkers, and by the Christian mystics. The aberrations found in Christian mysticism have often been of the most serious order; the idea of the deification of human nature finds no support in the New Testament, and can find a place only when Christianity is thought of as the religion of Incarnation rather than of Atonement, or rather where Incarnation itself is taken to be Atonement and made a principle that can be extended to all human nature. The *via negativa* of some of the mediæval mystics has nothing in common with the religion of the New Testament. The Ritschlian opposition to mysticism results from motives which we must approve, and lays bare much that is unsatisfactory in the mystical tendency; but the School has been far too much inclined to rest content with an

[1] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 56.

antithesis ; there has been no proper attempt to form a synthesis and to do justice to those elements in mysticism which can rely on some of the deepest thoughts of the New Testament.

The Ritschlian theologians oppose mysticism as it has historically developed within the Christian Church. One or two quotations will serve to show what they understand by the word. Professor Herrmann, in his work entitled *The Communion of the Christian with God*, which is the most important work produced by any member of the School against mysticism, and in favour of another view of the nature of Christian religious experience, writes as follows: 'When the influence of God upon the soul is sought and found solely in an inward experience of the individual, that is, in an excitement of the emotions, taken, with no further question, as evidence that the soul is possessed by God ; without, at the same time, anything external to the soul being consciously and clearly perceived and firmly grasped as the positive contents of any soul-dominating idea giving rise to thoughts that elevate the spiritual life, then that is the piety of mysticism.'[1] Kaftan opposes 'Spiritualised Natural Religion or Mysticism' to Christianity, and speaks of it as the religion 'in which a chief good that consists in being merged in the Godhead and its life is aspired to, but in such a way that the object of desire is not regarded as something moral, but is sought in ecstatic experiences ; an instance being furnished by Brahminism in India.'[2]

Elsewhere, distinguishing mysticism from the

[1] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, pp. 22-23. (E. T.)

[2] Kaftan, quoted from *Das Wesen der christlichen Religion*, in *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, vol. i. p. 9. (E. T.)

Revealed Religion which we possess in Christianity, he says that it 'transfers Revelation to the individual soul; the Godhead by this means communicating itself to that soul in superabundant measure, and offering itself for its enjoyment. Here Revelation requires no independent and objective basis as contrasted with religious experience. And whereas in Christianity nature is only in a remoter degree the theatre of Revelation, the region in which are displayed the power and wisdom of the personal God Who has to be clearly distinguished from it, it is consistent with the Pantheistic faith of Mystical piety to view the universal life of the world, including nature, as the self-manifestation of the Godhead.'[1] This last statement of Kaftan's brings us immediately to the first great objection taken by the Ritschlian School to mystical piety, the objection that it tends to lose sight of the unique, all-transcending, historical revelation of God in the life and work of Jesus Christ. The mystical piety which aspires to rise beyond this has no rule by which it can test the validity of its experiences. True Christian experience, on the other hand, roots itself in that fact of history, and continually tests itself by a reference thereto. Ritschl gives clear expression to this when he says that 'the personal relation of God or Christ to us is and remains mediated by our exact remembrance of the word, that is, of the law and the promise of God, and God works upon us only through the one or the other of these revelations. Nothing more is said here than what Calvin has already said. "This is the true knowledge of Christ—to receive Him

[1] Kaftan, quoted in *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, vol. i. p. 96. (E. T.)

as He is presented to us by the Father, *clothed with His own Gospel*, because as He is intended to be the object of our faith, so we do not rightly move towards Him unless His Gospel goes before." And in this no change is made by the consideration that Christ is at present in His exaltation. For the representation which one has to form of this case can only include the content, which is assured by the historical account of Christ. The assertion of immediateness of these and similar relations destroys the possibility of distinguishing between reality and hallucination. Those who maintain this pretension of immediate personal relation to Christ or God are clearly but little versed in the literature of mysticism.'[1] Further on he argues against the Pietists that the enjoyment of the Lord Himself cannot be detached from the enjoyment of His promises. Herrmann is equally positive; 'Mysticism,' he declares, 'is a particular species of religion, namely, a piety which feels that which is historical in positive religions to be burdensome, and so rejects it.'[2] Herrmann's own positive belief as to the certainty of our religious communion with God is to be found in the same work, where he bases this certainty '*on two objective facts, the first of which is the historical fact of the Person of Jesus.*' '*The second objective ground* of the Christian's consciousness that God communes with him *is that we hear within ourselves the demand of the moral law.*'[3] His meaning becomes still clearer, when we consider his answer to those who deduce an *immediate* communion of the soul with God from the fact that

[1] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 51.
[2] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 27. (E. T.)
[3] Herrmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-103. (E. T.)

Christ brings us to God. Herrmann will not hear of any separation between God and the historic Christ, and therefore entirely denies the Christian character of any wish that would attempt to pass beyond the historic Christ into a more immediate communion with God. 'If God,' he writes, 'in bringing Christ near to the individual soul, gives to that soul the full tidings of what is in God's heart, and if He thereby gives the soul clear vision and peace, then He makes that soul feel His own Almighty power, and deals with such a soul in the most direct and intimate way possible. A more immediate contact of the soul cannot be conceived or wished for, save by those who do not think of their God as a Personal Spirit, but as an impersonal substance. The Personal Spirit communes with us through manifestations of His inner life, and when He consciously and purposely makes us feel what His mind is, then we feel Himself. Hence we must utterly reject the idea that God can in any way come nearer to the individual soul than when He lets Himself be found in Christ.'[1] Herrmann does not reject mysticism because he thinks its aim a false one, but because he considers that there is a far better way than the mystical way, which may therefore be dispensed with. The aim of mysticism is the aim of all true religion—to bring men into fellowship with God Himself; 'but the man who has found Jesus Christ, and God in Him, can dispense with mysticism, for in the narrow experiences into which mysticism withdraws there is no room for the life of Christian faith.'[2] It is clear that the Ritschlian attitude, even if we consider

[1] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, pp. 184-185. (E. T.)
[2] Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 199. (E. T.)

it exaggerated in its hostility, is dictated by a real concern for the exclusive power of Jesus Christ to be the way to salvation. For the Ritschlians as for St. Peter it is in the name of the man Christ Jesus alone that salvation is brought nigh. The Ritschlians do not say that there is no truth in other religions and other types of piety : Herrmann, as we saw in a previous chapter, is quite willing to admit the presence of a real knowledge of God even among savages ; but when the question is of professing Christians organised into a society through the historic life and work of Jesus, then the Ritschlian theologians look on any attempt to elevate to the highest place a mystical piety, which is characteristic of other religions besides Christianity, as a turning-away from what is distinctively Christian. And we must admit that the history of Christian mysticism furnishes good ground for suspicion and protest. Whereas in those writings of the New Testament which display most clearly a mystical side, in the Johannine literature, Jesus Christ as incarnate, as living and working on earth, is the central figure, and the conception of the Logos as explaining the mystery of His Person is kept in the background ; in all subsequent mysticism, from Clement of Alexandria downwards, the insistence on the pre-existent Logos tends more and more to throw into the background the historical facts connected with the earthly life of Jesus, so that they cease to have any significance for the 'enlightened.' The result of such γνῶσις is that Christ ceases to be 'clothed with His own Gospel,' as Calvin puts it, and Christianity is turned into a mystical philosophy. All this is thoroughly alien from the teaching of the New Testa-

ment, not only from the mind of St. Paul and St. John, but also from the mind of the Lord Himself as set forth in the surest synoptic tradition. All the emphasis which Jesus lays upon His own Person, all His claim to men's allegiance, which traverses so directly any humanistic interpretation of His Personality, is not to be transferred from Him in His historical life to a divine principle behind it. It is the Man Christ Jesus Who calls men to Him, and it is no genuine Christian piety which forgets His life on earth in order to speculate on the pre-existent Logos.

In the second place, the Ritschlians, in the interests of real faith and piety, of real forgiveness and holiness, oppose a piety which makes hardly anything of the great doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, which subordinates faith to love, and which is characteristic of Catholicism rather than of the principles of the Reformation. For those who hold to the Pauline doctrine of Justification, blessedness and eternal life will take on a different meaning from that given to them in the mystical system. Ritschl shows where the superiority of 'evangelical' Christianity lies; 'The mystics,' he says, 'claim to enjoy the blessedness of the future in moments of ecstasy in the present life. They have, however, to suffer for their elevation of spirit at such moments through subsequent lassitude, aridity, and barrenness of the feelings, and the sense of desertion by God. The Reformers, on the other hand, live in the faith that eternal life, and the joy which attaches to it, namely, blessedness, are present gifts, continually enjoyed as the result of the forgiveness of sins.'[1] In several places Ritschl severely

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 98-99. (E. T.)

criticises the mystical communion with Christ as the Bridegroom of the soul, a conception drawn primarily from the Song of Songs: 'Sentimental communion with Christ as the Bridegroom is quite different from trust in Christ as the Bearer of the Divine promise. . . . Whenever mysticism is found, the thought of justification no longer retains its true significance as the key to the whole domain of Christian life, but is so depreciated as to become a mere formal precondition of the immediate union with God, or the immediate communion with Christ, to which Mysticism strives to attain.'[1] Ritschl makes a perfectly right protest against the lack of reverence often involved in the conception of Christ as Bridegroom: there is a form of tender attachment to Christ, very far from uncommon to-day, which is wholly out of place in a soul that is dealing with its Redeemer and Lord. Dr. Forsyth has admirably summed up this tendency by declaring that there is a form of love for Christ which loses sight of His redeeming grace. Herrmann points out that in the Epistles of the New Testament love to Christ is rarely mentioned, and approves of the reason for its absence given by Ritschl, namely, that love does not show whether, in our love for Christ, we set ourselves on an equality with Him or subject ourselves to Him.[2] All such mystical piety seems to the Ritschlians essentially Catholic. The interaction of Catholicism and mysticism is well brought out by Kaftan. 'When, therefore,' he says, 'the world of expiring antiquity appropriated Christianity with the intellectual means at its disposal, a

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 112-113. (E. T.)
[2] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 273. (E. T.)

fusion such as we have spoken of, a fusion of Christianity with spiritualised mystical Natural Religion, has to take place. Thence arose Catholicism. The Christian idea of the Chief Good, which establishes the unity of Religion and Morality, is so far displaced, that mystical union with the Godhead and the asceticism which flies the world are aspired to as the chief goal of man, and moral activity is only estimated as the indispensable condition certainly, but yet as a merely *external* condition of future blessedness.' He goes on to show that as the importance of historical revelation is belittled, and the free obedience of faith becomes impossible, since the Chief Good passes beyond the limits of reason, blind obedience to the Church can alone bind the individual to revelation; hence the authority of revelation becomes rigid, external, and can be nothing else. 'In short, all the essential features of the Catholic form of Christianity can be derived from that displacement towards the side of mystical Natural Religion which was mentioned.'[1] Ritschl finds in mysticism the 'characteristically Catholic interpretation of eternal life—that it consists exclusively in the vision of God. . . . If our Reformation is really epoch-making, it must also supply the elements of another conception of eternal life, or blessedness, than obtained at the preceding stages of Christian history. In the notion of ἀφθαρσία the Greek Church merely perpetuated an idea of blessedness derived from the Hellenic mysteries. By its conception of the knowledge or vision of God the Latin Church merely gave its sanction

[1] Kaftan, quoted from *Das Wesen der christlichen Religion*, in *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, vol. i. pp. 61-62. (E. T.)

to the aims of the Neo-platonic philosophy.'[1] Herrmann similarly attacks those who, from within Protestantism, exalt the mystical spirit. 'If Protestant theologians to-day think,' he says, 'that they cannot part company with mysticism, then they really admit that they cannot free themselves from Roman Catholicism. For in Roman Catholicism mysticism is the essential life of religion.'[2] A similar view of mysticism is taken by Harnack.

The representation of mysticism as peculiarly at home in Roman Catholicism and out of place in Protestantism has been strenuously opposed by Professor Inge in his Paddock Lectures. While refusing to confine mysticism to any one section of the Christian world, he considers that 'it would be a somewhat less perverse misstatement to say that mysticism is Protestant piety. For the essence of Protestantism is, I suppose, the right and duty of private judgment, the belief in individual inspiration. . . . Catholicism has tolerated and used mysticism, but has never viewed it without suspicion, and has often persecuted it. . . . To say that "mysticism is Catholic piety," is to show that the speaker entirely fails to understand both mysticism and Catholicism.'[3] Professor Inge is probably the most sympathetic expounder of mysticism whom we possess, but in estimating the value of this criticism we must bear in mind that he himself is a mystic and also a particularly keen opponent of Roman Catholicism, so that he can hardly be expected to deal with the general

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 497. (E. T.)
[2] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 27. (E. T.)
[3] Inge, *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, pp. 127-128.

question from an unbiassed standpoint. His criticism is unsuccessful for two reasons: in the first place, he has passed over the quite undeniable relation of Christian mysticism, in its beginnings and development, to orthodox doctrine; the formulated dogmas of the Church were all rooted in the conception of Christ as the divine Logos, and it is equally the Logos doctrine which formed the basis for the growth of mystical piety. The present writer holds strongly that the extent to which Platonic and Neo-platonic philosophy influenced Christian doctrine has been greatly exaggerated, but it cannot be denied that Neo-platonism did react upon Christianity, and that it reacted both upon Christian doctrine and Christian piety. The truth of the Ritschlian position will be seen if we try to conceive of early Christianity as developing not into Catholicism, but into a fuller understanding of the Pauline doctrine of Justification by Faith, a doctrine that was not destined to come to its own till the Reformation. On such a soil Christian mysticism could not possibly have developed *in the way in which, as we know, it did develop.* From the standpoint of history Ritschl is right in declaring that 'mysticism is the practice of Neo-platonic metaphysics,'[1] and we must surely agree that the Neo-platonic metaphysic is far more adapted to a Catholic than a Protestant kind of Christianity. As to the fact that Catholicism has viewed mysticism with suspicion, that is quite true; but it is more pertinent to take account of the mystics' attitude towards Catholicism than of official Catholicism's attitude towards the mystics. The mystics did not feel

[1] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 27.

themselves oppressed by orthodox Catholicism ; even to-day such a man as the late George Tyrrell, who was a thorough mystic, had no desire at all to separate himself from Catholicism, while his whole type of mind was essentially Catholic, not Protestant. That mysticism developed, in part, in opposition to an over-intellectualisation of dogma, and excessive attention to a prescribed ' cultus,' is true ; but it is also true that the Catholic dogmatic and the Catholic Sacramentalism offered it the greatest assistance in its evolution. Secondly, Professor Inge has, surely, in his remarks on the essence of Protestantism, failed to exercise adequate care. Let it be granted that mystics are thorough-going empiricists, as Professor Royce, with Dr. Inge's approval, asserts ; let it further be granted that the great Reformers were, in a high degree, empiricists, and that the extreme empiric developments of Quakerism and Anabaptism, which cannot be denied a place in the general Reformation movement, were merely exaggerations of something essentially Protestant ; yet it is misleading to write of the essence of Protestantism as though it were simply the belief in individual inspiration, the claim of every one to live by the light that God has given him. Protestantism neither destroyed authority, nor canonised the natural man. It set up two leading principles—Justification by Faith alone, and the sole Authority of Holy Scripture as the inspired Word of God. To say, as is so often the case, and as Dr. Inge says by implication, that Protestantism asserted the right of private judgment, is to say very little : what we wish to know is what is the result of this private judgment. For the Reformers the use of private

judgment was to lead its possessor to the true Authority, to the infallible Scripture, and the redeeming Lord revealed there. The conception of authority became unduly hardened in Protestantism, partly because Catholic doctrines were taken over in large numbers and subjected to no real criticism, partly because the experienced liberating power of the Holy Scriptures led on, naturally enough, to the most stringent view of their inerrancy; but the principle of authority was not only always present in Protestantism, but was of the utmost importance. 'Individual inspiration,' 'the light that God has given him'—what value would any one of the great Reformers have put upon either of these, except in so far as it was transformed and made new by the redeeming, liberating, authoritative Cross of the Saviour? And now, when it is seen that men ought not to force themselves to assent to the thoughts of Scripture any more than to the doctrines of the Church, the question of Authority is perhaps the most crucial of all questions for Protestantism, for neither Protestantism nor any other form of Christianity will live, unless it can point its members to some Authority, to which they may submit their very souls. Dr. Inge has not made out his case. There have been Protestants who were also mystics, but they were not mystics because they were Protestants.

There is one further objection which the Ritschlians level against mysticism, and it is one that is very characteristic of their entire thought. Mysticism seems to them to subordinate activity to rest, work to contemplation. The ideal mystic, therefore, is the contemplative monk, who withdraws from the

world and gives himself up to prayer and meditation. The representatives of the School never tire of denouncing this kind of piety, often represented as the very highest, and in this they follow Luther faithfully, and make their appeal beyond Luther to the New Testament. 'Pietistic or mystical directions,' says Ritschl, 'are always so stated as though the Christian existed only for contemplation, and as though work, which interrupts his meditations, were worth nothing. But this is a denial of the principle of the Reformation, that justification in actual fact becomes matter of experience through the discharge of moral tasks, while these are to be discharged in the labours of one's vocation.'[1] The 'double standard' found in Catholicism is repudiated with great force by Ritschl: he will not hear of a 'religious life' which is superior to the life led in observance of moral duties and the practice of non-monastic religion. Herrmann draws out the difference between Luther and his opponents, between their view that any work in the world separates from God, and his that a man must have a worldly calling in order to the fulfilment of his moral duty: 'he did not mean by this,' continues Herrmann, 'that a Christian would become more perfect if he allowed worldly affairs to withdraw him for a time from communion with God. His idea was rather that just in bowing to moral obligations we turn ourselves to the divine.'[2] That in the performance of our moral duties we have communion with God is, for Herrmann, a necessary truth if monasticism is to be successfully opposed. 'The Protestant attitude

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 163. (E. T.)

[2] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 209. (E. T.)

to the world must be that the morally ordained communion with things visible is to be lived in as a necessary movement in the process of communion with the invisible God.' [1] Moral conduct must never be divorced from the impulse of faith, and we must always look for faith working through love: so 'moral conduct must be capable of an interpretation as an activity which is not merely a consequence and a suspension of religious experience, but which itself belongs to the communion of the Christian with God.' [2] For the Ritschlians, as for Zwingli, the duty of man is to do difficult things in fellowship with God—*ardua facere cum Deo*—and in this, not in the play of sentimental imagination, is the sense of joyous communion with God to be looked for.

There is one special question to which we must now pay some attention. For most Christians, who are really in earnest about their religion, the desire to find themselves in touch with the exalted Christ is ever present on the experimental side of their religion. But it is just here that Ritschlianism seems to give an uncertain sound, if not to deny altogether the truth of what Professor Inge, on the other hand, considers the most verifiable part of religious experience. The *locus classicus* for the Ritschlian attitude is to be found in Herrmann's book, from which we have so often quoted, but a word may first be said on Ritschl's own position. In the first place, he certainly does not cut off the heavenly reign of Christ; [3] he asserts plainly that Christ in His exalted state continues to exercise

[1] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 317. (E. T.)
[2] Herrmann, *op. cit.*; p. 320. (E. T.)
[3] As Dr. Orr says of Ritschlianism in *Ritschlianism*, etc., p. 25.

the functions of kingly Prophethood and Priesthood.[1] In the second place, he thinks of Christ as exerting a real influence upon ourselves and as being present in His working upon us. 'When one rightly thinks operations,' he says, 'one thinks the cause in the operations. . . . So what we religiously affirm as the working of God or Christ in us, assures us not of the absence, but of the presence of those Authors of our salvation.'[2] But Ritschl grasps a fact, which is, after all, the truth, that we have no means of representing to ourselves the nature of Christ's present heavenly reign, and that therefore, as the author of Ecclesiastes puts it, our words should be few. We must always be prepared to check our imaginations by references to the historic Christ. 'The formula which describes Christ as exalted to the right hand of God, either has for us no meaning, since Christ as exalted is beyond our ken, or else offers an occasion for every form of extravagance, unless regard be had to the fact that between Christ and the community of believers, which He designed by His words, deeds, and patience to establish, there is an abiding relation whereby Christ continues to be the ground of its existence and specific character.'[3]

From Ritschl we turn to Herrmann. In his pamphlet on *The Certainty of Faith and the Freedom of Theology* he replies to Luthardt's challenge as to how a fact of the past—the life of Christ—can be present to us now, and give us that communion with God, which we need here and to-day. Herrmann, in his answer, points to the present experienced fact of the forgiveness

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 431. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, pp. 49-50.
[3] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 431. (E. T.)

of our sins, which proceeds from our certainty that God's love is revealed in the historical revelation of Christ and that there He deals with us. As so often in Herrmann, the moral problem and its solution supplies the key, for our moral need is the most real fact of our present experience, and it is only in a fact of the past—the appearance of Jesus Christ—that we find the way to freedom. Thus is formed a bridge between the past and the present. 'Christ's historical appearance,' says Herrmann, 'is an element in man's own existence.'[1] The thought of the exalted Christ is not, for him, a primary thought, but one that arises from a faith which has its foundation elsewhere. He does not deny the truth of Luthardt's assertion, that in the means of grace the exalted Christ is present and actively working. But whereas Luthardt makes this thought of the exalted One the ground of faith, Herrmann says 'we know that the thought of such powerful working of the exalted Christ arises in the faith which through the historic Christ has experienced the operation of God.'[2] He sums up his position with the declaration that 'we do not *experience* the exalted Christ, but we are certain of His operation in the faith which we win through experiences of the historic Christ.'[3] Passing to Herrmann's work on *Communion with God*, we find him appealing to Luther against those who would try to turn away from Christ's life-work in order to enjoy special, peculiar communion with Him as exalted. He quotes the following very pertinent passage from the great Reformer: 'The man who lets go of Christ's life

[1] Herrmann, *Die Gewissheit des Glaubens, und die Freiheit der Theologie*, p. 36.

[2] Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

[3] Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

and work, and desires now to seek Him as He sits in heaven in some private way, betrays Him afresh. He must seek Him as He was and walked on earth ; then shall he find life ; it was there He came to be our Life, our Light, and our Blessedness ; it was there that all took place that we are to believe concerning Him. Even as it is said in the Mass, " In Him was Life " ; not that He is not now our life, but that He does not now do what He then did.'[1] In his section on ' The Historical and the Exalted Christ in the Life of Faith,' Herrmann gives his thought fullest expression, and it is so important that a brief indication and analysis of its contents seems necessary. He begins by pointing out the danger that besets imaginative people of forming a picture of Christ and communing with it as though it were the Lord Himself, whereas life is to be sought not in any picture of our own fashioning, but in the historic Christ. He goes on to answer those who say they desire a personal relation with Christ personally present to them now, while the historic Christ is separated by the centuries. But, says Herrmann, we are not really separated from the Christ of history, for in Him we see the Living God, and in Him experience forgiveness. ' This is the presence of Christ, which we can *experience* in true communion with God, when His appearance in history comes home to our hearts as the most important thing in the whole world. We Christians cannot experience any other presence of God and Christ, and we desire no other.'[2] With Luther, Herrmann asserts that to seek God or Christ in the imagination is to withdraw from reality, and

[1] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, pp. 188-189. (E. T.)

[2] Herrmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-284. (E. T.)

that the sense of Christ's nearness results from a reflective thought of faith. Over against monastic contemplation Herrmann sets, as Ritschl so often does, that lordship over the world and over all external circumstances, in which God is certainly present. Herrmann's second objection to contemplative piety rises from his sense that it would substitute sight at present for faith and hope. His third objection is that contemplative love stops at Christ's humanity instead of seeking in Him the Almighty Love and Will, which sets us free. Here again he follows Ritschl, who repeatedly argues that the mystical view of Christ as the Bridegroom of the soul practically ignores His Godhead, and sees in Him only the fairest of the sons of men.'[1]

So far Herrmann's attitude has been one of criticism, but he passes beyond that to his positive view. We may be sure that the personal life of Jesus could never have been given over to annihilation, and therefore faith grasps the thought 'that Jesus lives now, perfected and freed from all earthly limits.'[2] Hence, in his experiences, the Christian sees Christ acting, and is sure that He in His exaltation knows how near we have come to Him. But the thought that the exalted Christ works upon us can only spring from faith in God Who has revealed Himself in definite facts : Herrmann will not allow us to speak of a communion with the exalted Christ, which is its own verification ; 'The risen Christ,' he says, 'is hidden from us.'[3] We are indeed sure that He helps us in our struggles, but this faith is not created by any experience of our own in

[1] Cf. Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 549. (E. T.)
[2] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 290. (E. T.)
[3] Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 291. (E. T.)

which we can assert that we have had communion with the exalted Christ, but a confidence in the power of God as revealed in the life of Christ makes us certain of Christ's nearness to us. The self-revelation of God in the historic Christ enables us to say that He communes with us, but there has been no similar self-revelation of the exalted Christ. For immediate communion with the exalted Christ the believer must wait in hope till he sees Him as He is ; but at present he must be content with faith, and not seek to pass beyond to immediate experience.

It must be admitted that there is considerable lack of clearness, both in Herrmann's conception and in his method of expression ; and yet it is possible to understand what especially influences him. He distrusts the imagination, and the pictures of the risen Christ formed therein, since there is no satisfactory means of testing their reality. Even if we feel that he makes too much of the monastic contemplative view as normative for all attempts to have immediate communion with the exalted Lord, we must admit that any attempt at such direct communion with Christ in the soul, with all external matters excluded, invests the human imagination with a power that may be wrongly used. Also we must remember the personal equation : all his writings proclaim Herrmann as a Christian of extraordinary faith ; and the assurance that his faith gives him of the presence of the risen Christ, even though he denies direct communion with Him, makes up to him everything that he seems to lose by confining his attention so strictly to the Christ of history. A man who is made certain by his faith that the risen Christ is near him, interested in him,

and helping him in his struggles, possesses almost everything which a mysticism, distinctively Christian, can profess to give. We may be specially grateful to him for his protest against the secularisation of history, and of ordinary work in the world, his demand that in these things the Christian should see God working and should come into touch with God. The defects in his position spring from his assumption that those who speak of direct communion with the exalted Christ must move along the road of monastic contemplation. But this is by no means the case with most of those for whom the risen Lord is a luminous, self-evidencing Being, to Whom, in prayer, a man may speak as to a friend. Yet even these need to be reminded of the continual necessity of testing the validity of their feelings and experiences by all that we learn from the Gospels. And if, as is often the case, hostile critics explain away these feelings as mere subjective impressions, then, as Dr. Garvie excellently puts it, 'what other relief from doubt can there be than the retracing of this process of mediation?'[1]—that is, that appeal should be made to the historic Jesus and the Gospel revelation?

Kaftan is as much opposed to mysticism of the contemplative, monastic order as Ritschl and Herrmann, and, along with them, elevates faith, and sees in the presence of faith a real communion with God. But he is more sympathetic to mystical ideals than other leaders of the School, so much so indeed that Ritschl found it necessary to attack his interpretation of Colossians iii. 3. For Kaftan the life of the soul hid with Christ in God is the kernel of

[1] Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 406.

Christianity, and he draws a distinction, that would have been impossible for Ritschl or Herrmann, between the mystical side of Christianity, which is turned away from the world, and its ethical side, which is turned towards it. Ritschl,[1] however, will see in the Pauline formula, 'Your life is hid with Christ in God,' nothing but the expression of the believer's lordship over the world, while Herrmann[2] repudiates the idea that the words refer to any communion with the exalted Lord. Kaftan, on the other hand, sees that the fact of the Resurrection could not but lead on the disciples and the first Christian community to develop that conception of the highest good which had resulted from the teaching of Jesus, so that the Person of the exalted Lord became for them the great supernatural fact, taking the place occupied by the conception of the Kingdom of God in much of the teaching given by Jesus in His life before the crucifixion and resurrection. Kaftan's doctrine is a valuable supplement to the more uncompromisingly critical attitude of Ritschl and Herrmann.

There is no position of the Ritschlian School on which it is easier for the student to go astray, than its relation to the problem of mysticism. It is always necessary to remember that by mysticism these theologians mean, not religious experience, but a particular form and method of religious experience. Moreover, they are concerned not merely about vital religion, but about vital Christianity; and mysticism, however widely it has found a home in the Christian Church, is by no means a specifically Christian product.

[1] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 43.

[2] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 293. (E. T.)

But if the historic fact of the Person of Jesus is that from which and round which the Christian religion has grown, then all typically Christian experience must be related as closely as possible to this fact. That that experience is not undervalued by the Ritschlians will be clear from two final quotations from Herrmann, perhaps the most extreme representative of the School on this question, one of which refers to experience of God, the other to experience of the saving power of Jesus. 'Religion,' he says in his essay in *Das Christentum*, 'is before everything a matter of individual experience. . . . God is only then a reality to us, if through our own experiences we feel ourselves compelled to acknowledge Him as real. . . . Religion can for every man rest only on experiences which he has for himself alone, and on facts which he cannot communicate or prove to any other person.'[1] The other quotation is from his *Communion with God*: 'The only thing of importance is to elevate above everything else that present experience in which we and others feel that the power of Jesus really exercises an inward compulsion upon us and lifts us out of ourselves. . . . The inner life of Jesus is the saving fact. For we to-day, just as disciples of every age, can grasp it ourselves as a reality. For in it we ourselves meet the Personal Spirit, Who, in all that He does for us, confirms the claim tradition makes for Him that He is the Saviour of the world.'[2] The Ritschlians are at one with all Christians in testifying to the experience of the tempted soul that, in the midst of its struggles, God is about its path and

[1] Herrmann, Essay in *Das Christentum*, p. 117.

[2] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, pp. 82-83. (E. T.)

upholds it from falling. Nor is the fervour of faith and devotion lacking: the trust in Jesus Christ as Redeemer, the sense of His present might, glows in the pages of Herrmann's great work with an ardour that no mystic could excel. The School has carried its legitimate fear of the dangers of an unchecked imagination to excessive lengths, and, as we said at the beginning of this chapter, has not done justice to some of the profoundest thoughts of the New Testament, but there is more of a New Testament ring about its assertions and denials than in many of the manifestations of the mystical spirit, which, ever since the days of the great Alexandrine theologians, have lost the Man Christ Jesus while following out the supposed implications of the Logos doctrine. And while we cannot believe that Ritschlianism has said the last word on the general problem, while we may even think that, since Ritschl wrote, a fuller study of the human spirit and the facts of psychology point away from the direction in which Ritschl led his followers, we shall, as regards the objections which he levelled against the historical trend of Christian mysticism, agree with Professor Oman that 'both experience and history afford corroboration of this contention.'[1]

[1] Oman, *Problem of Faith and Freedom*, p. 392.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RITSCHLIAN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY: I. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

In an earlier chapter we have had to deal with the Ritschlian conception of the methods by which a true idea of God may or may not be reached. We saw then that it was characteristic of all the leading theologians of the School to distrust metaphysical approaches to the idea of God, and to rely upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. But of the content of the idea of God we said little or nothing. We must therefore now, at the very beginning of this statement of the Ritschlian view on the chief problems of systematic theology, consider the attributes ascribed to God, and the idea of His character with which they proceed on their work of construction.

In a famous passage Ritschl speaks of Christianity as 'an ellipse with two foci,'[1] these two foci being the doctrines of personal redemption through Jesus, that is, justification by faith, and of the Kingdom of God. The one is the religious, the other the ethical interpretation of Christianity, between which, according to Ritschl, a fairer balance must be held, and more insistence laid on the ethical idea, than has been

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 11. (E. T.)

customary in Protestant theology. But without pausing to consider whether he does not make the balance incline too much to the other side, we may try to see whether there is not some common conception of God, which, for Ritschl, lies at the back of these fundamental propositions. What conclusions can we draw from the fact that God has sent Christ, His Son, to reveal Him perfectly, to reveal the end which He sets before man, and which is also His own self-end, by the establishment upon earth of the Kingdom of God ?

We do find in Ritschl a conception of God which is regulative in both these doctrines ; it is the conception of God as Father. ' Jesus,' he says, ' explicitly connects the operation of God in forgiveness with *His attribute as Father*.' [1] He contrasts this conception of God as Father with that of Him as Judge, which in post-Reformation theology was often looked on as primary, where the forgiveness of sins was under discussion, and subordinates the latter to the former. ' The title of Judge as applied to God has for Christians no real place alongside of, or over, the relation in which He stands to them as Father.' [2] A little further on in the discussion He introduces the idea of the Kingdom of God, and shows that in this connection also the conception of God as Father is entirely congruous ; ' it corresponds to the transference to the whole of mankind of His relative moral and legal Lordship over the people of Israel for the bringing about of the highest moral end.' The religious and the moral are harmonised in his conclusion that ' the forgiveness of sins by

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 93. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 94. (E. T.)

God as Father is a universal, though not unconditioned, fundamental law, established in the interest of the community of the Kingdom of God.' [1]

In another passage Ritschl expands the meaning he attaches to the Divine Fatherhood. He argues—and appeals to the full New Testament description of God as ' the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' for support—that we must make as our starting-point in dealing with the moral order of the world, the conception of God in which His relation to His Son is expressed, and which through the Son is mediated to the Christian community. God, therefore, is rightly considered as manifesting Himself to His Son, and to the community, as '*loving Will*.' 'The goodness of God,' he writes, ' as the general presupposition of everything, is embraced in the specific attribute of the Divine Fatherhood ; or, in other words, the truth that He has revealed Himself to the Christian community as love. There is no other conception of equal worth beside this which need be taken into account.' [2] This conception of God as loving Will is of the greatest importance for Ritschl. It imports a meaning into the Divine personality, and it explains the world as we know it with the Kingdom of God for its end. A mere conception of God as indeterminate Will is no more helpful, in Ritschl's view, than a conception of Him as Substance, for no consistent view of the world and its meaning is possible if all kinds of contents can be ascribed to the Divine Will. Ritschl's theology is here entirely dominated by practical considerations, for it cannot be said that there is any logical coherence in his argument : as

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 95. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 273. (E. T.)

he puts it elsewhere, 'God is conceived in general as love in order to explain the Kingdom of God as the final end of the world and therefore the world itself.'[1] The truth is, that what Dr. Garvie calls 'the regulative use of the idea of the Kingdom of God' has a cramping influence on Ritschl's thought. This doctrine is a kind of Procrustean bed, and all other beliefs and propositions are made to fit it exactly, however much they deserve treatment on their own merits, and do not need to look for external support. Moreover, the doctrine of the Kingdom as the purposive end of God's loving will fitted in admirably with Ritschl's dislike of the category of substance, and of all static qualities, when he came to treat of the attributes of God: for these he looked upon not so much as attributes of His nature as characteristics of His action. Leaving out of sight for the present the question of the wrath of God, which will be dealt with in the next chapter, we may take, as typical of his method, his description of what is meant by the Eternity of God. He rejects the definition of eternity as existence without beginning or end, because it ensures no essential distinction between God and the world, of which we cannot conceive the non-existence, and makes the idea of the eternity of God refer to 'the continual and immutable aim with which His will is directed towards His purpose, and towards the Kingdom of God as within that purpose; then the positive meaning of this conception of eternity is given when we compare it with the changing action of God in time, from which we can no more abstract in theology than in religion.'[2] Ritschl says that 'we

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 319. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 299. (E. T.)

recognise God's eternity in the fact that, amid all the changes of things, which also indicate variation in His working, He Himself remains the same, as well as maintains the same purpose and plan in which He creates and directs the world.'[1] There are two chief things to note about this definition : in the first place, Ritschl distorts the natural conception of eternity because he will not accord philosophical treatment to what is, after all, essentially a philosophic idea, but insists on regulating it by a religious view of something totally different—namely, the Kingdom of God ; and, secondly, though here, as always, Ritschl interprets what is, for him, a religious idea by the category of will, he really succeeds in transforming God's eternity into a quite stationary and immovable nature, for the temporal variations in God's working have no effect upon God's decision to make the Kingdom of God His own end, a decision which never varies. Similarly, no very satisfactory account is given of the meaning of God's omnipotence and omnipresence, while the holiness of God, which is an ethical as opposed to a metaphysical attribute, is dismissed on the ground that its New Testament use, which alone is valid for Christians, is indistinct : as a matter of fact, we may believe that, as the conception of God's holiness clearly could not be made a mere adjunct or interpretation of His self-end and loving Will in founding the Kingdom, Ritschl found that he was unable to make any use of it. We shall see certain of the effects of this in the next chapter.

Let us return to the idea of the Kingdom of God as following from the love of God, following, that is, in

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 14. (E. T.)

the mind of God, for, as we saw above, he postulates the love of God in order to explain the Kingdom of God founded by Christ. The Kingdom of God is indeed the object of God's love, but mediately, not directly. 'It is on the Son of God that in the first place the Father's love falls, and, only for His sake, on the community of which He is Lord.'[1] This love for the members of the community, however, though mediated, is none the less real, and here it may be said that the present writer does not find in Ritschl's expanded definitions of the idea of love that disregard for the personal ideals of the lover and concentration on the ends of the loved one, which Dr. Garvie seems to see.[2] It is true that Ritschl says that 'love aims at the promotion of the other's personal end whether known or conjectured'; but he also says that 'love estimates everything which concerns the other, by its bearing on the character in which the loved one is precious to the lover.'[3] As this character can only be conceived of by reference to those things which the lover himself considers desirable and ranks among his own ideals, Ritschl has avoided an excessive altruism. At the same time we must admit that in Ritschl's exposition God often seems lost in His Kingdom.

'The Kingdom of God,' says Ritschl, 'is the correlate of God's love in so far as it is the association of men for reciprocal and common action from the motive of love.'[4] The task of promoting the complete establishment of the Kingdom devolves on those who,

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 468. (E. T.)
[2] Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 257.
[3] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 277. (E. T.)
[4] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 290. (E. T.)

being reconciled with God, make God's purposes their own. 'The effects of divine redemption find practical application on the condition that the believer takes at once an active part in the recognised purpose of the Kingdom of God, and has given up the following of selfish ends and inclinations.'[1] The connection between the religious and moral ends of the Christian's life is shown most clearly in the following passage from the *Instruction*. 'Practical proof of sonship with God in spiritual freedom and dominion over the world, and labour for the Kingdom of God, fill out the Christian life. . . . The correlation of these activities, the first religious and the second ethical, is evident in the fact that the religious duty of dominion over the world calls for the same effort of will as the ethical duty belonging to the Kingdom of God, and that this latter includes in itself religious elevation above the world.'[2] Yet despite this statement, which, taken by itself, does full justice to both elements, there can be no doubt that in the working out of Ritschl's system the moral predominates over the religious element. Ritschl can be acquitted of any tendency towards a doctrine of 'Justification by works'—the fact that the promotion of the Kingdom is the work of redeemed persons safeguards him in this respect—but it is regrettable that he should, in practice, lay so much more stress on the work man may do for God, than on the work done by God for and upon man.

Of the chief followers of Ritschl, Harnack, more than others, owing to his historical researches into

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 37. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, § 47. (E. T.)

the first beginnings of Christianity in the teaching of Jesus Himself, has put the idea of the Kingdom of God in the forefront. But not only does he not attempt to make of it an all-comprehending principle, but he sees in it the work of God in the individual rather than a moral task set before man. According to Jesus' message, he declares, 'the Kingdom of God comes by coming to the individual, by entering into his soul and laying hold of it. True, the Kingdom of God is the rule of God; but it is the rule of the holy God in the hearts of individuals: *it is God Himself in His power*.'[1] Herrmann certainly does not fail to appreciate the moral needs of man's nature, and his duties in the world. But the religious element, the saving of man's own inner life, is constantly prominent in him, and he makes but little use of the conception of the Kingdom of God. Kaftan admits that for the Apostles, and especially St. Paul, the witness to the risen Christ takes the place of the teaching concerning the Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed, nor does he condemn the change of attitude. Moreover, Dr. Orr points out that Kaftan in his *Dogmatik* makes hardly any use of the category of the Kingdom of God. Certainly Ritschl's disciples leave a very different impression upon the reader from that produced by Ritschl himself, who has been comparatively little followed in his attempt to make the idea of the Kingdom of God regulative in all systematic theology, so that one cannot agree with Wegener that adherence to this idea as central is the necessary mark of all members of the School. If this were the case we could hardly speak of a Ritschlian

[1] Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 57. (E. T.)

School at all. Even the younger members of the School, such as Baldensperger and Johannes Weiss, who have, more recently, devoted great attention to the idea of the Kingdom of God, have done so in the interests of historical research rather than with a view to constructive dogmatics.

We are now in a position, after this consideration of Ritschl's view of the attributes of God and of the Kingdom of God as resulting from the loving will of the Father, to inquire into the systematic doctrine concerning the historic Founder of God's Kingdom upon earth, constructed by Ritschl and his followers. It is Ritschl's great work that will mainly occupy our attention, but we shall find many of his leading ideas reproduced very faithfully in his disciples, though, as Dr. Garvie has most truly pointed out, with more general approximation to orthodoxy than is usual in the Master. Yet even in Ritschl, though we may find his Christology unsatisfactory owing to its inadequacy, we shall not see the familiar signs of modern rationalism. It is not merely the case that Ritschl preserves the old names and titles of Christ; more than this, he does his best to give full value to the ideas represented by these titles, and it is his theory of knowledge, rather than a defective sense of the worth of Christ's Person, which hampers him. Here we see the difficulties which Ritschl has in preserving his epistemology as a regulative, controlling force, and in preventing it from turning into a metaphysic in his hands, a metaphysic whose tendency is to negate the conclusions of orthodox doctrine. But before we deal directly with Ritschl's treatment of the Godhead of Christ, we may observe the positive

conceptions which he holds fast, and which are not involved in ambiguity.

Jesus is, for Ritschl, the perfect Revealer of God and the immediate Object of God's love, which is mediated through Him to the community He founded. Now, as we saw to be the case with Christianity, so, in forming an estimate of Jesus Christ, we can consider Him from the religious or the ethical standpoint. The religious judgment which we shall form of Jesus must correspond to His own self-judgment, and this religious self-judgment is seen when 'Jesus attributes to His life as a whole, in the unity which for His own consciousness it possesses, the worth of being the instrument of the complete self-revelation of God.'[1] This conception corresponds to the view of Christ found in the first verses of the fourth Gospel, in which the Divine Word is regarded as the form, the human personality as the material or content. But such a religious judgment taken by itself does not provide a satisfactory account of Christ's Person because it affords no scope for a reasonable view of His ethical independence and self-development: accordingly, we must vary it by an ethical judgment, which is also to be found in the Johannine prologue; for there the point of view is reversed from that given in the opening verses, and the human personality is regarded as the form, with divine grace and truth for the content. 'While,' says Ritschl, 'our religious judgment is to the effect that God is not merely with Him (Acts x. 38; John viii. 29), but in Him (John xiv. 10, xvii. 21), that His characteristic activities are the activities of God, that His love to men, as the motive of all His

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 436. (E. T.)

conduct, is identical with the love of God, yet we are compelled to alternate this judgment with others which express the ethical independence of Christ under the category of human freedom.' [1] But as in Christianity there is a close connection between the religious and ethical elements, so, with regard to the Person of Christ, the religious and ethical estimates cannot be kept wholly distinct. 'An ethical judgment of Jesus,' says Ritschl, 'in the light of His unique vocation to establish the Kingdom of God, if it follow His own judgment of Himself, runs out into a religious judgment, namely, His religious judgment of His own Person. Therefore, also, in our own thinking on this matter, the religious estimate of Christ must not be set over against the ethical, but added to it, as that without which it would not be complete.' [2]

This ethical estimate of Christ's Person precedes the religious estimate, and on it Ritschl lays great emphasis. His object is to secure in theological thought for Jesus a real, free, self-developing Personality. Orthodox theology, both Catholic and Protestant, had concentrated its attention so much on Christ's work for others, as to have little interest in the self-development of His own life. All the stress was laid on the salvation Christ had to win for others: little, or none, on anything He might have to do for Himself. The interest which Professor Du Bose, a theologian of a different type from Ritschl, is arousing to-day, is largely due to his repeated insistence on the fact that Christ had to act for Himself before He could act for

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 439. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 450. (E. T.)

others, that, as being in very reality Man, He had to win salvation for Himself. This is very much what Ritschl taught. He maintained that for Jesus, as for every other man, there must have been some definite personal self-end : ' what He was and accomplished, that He is in the first place for Himself.'[1] For Jesus His self-end was complete devotion to that vocation of which He felt conscious—that, namely, of realising God's ethical lordship. Thus Ritschl is able to import a distinct significance into Christ's sufferings, for His patience under suffering was a manifestation of His obedience to His vocation, and so His suffering ' becomes a kind of doing.' But though Ritschl gives this ethical estimate of the connection between Christ's vocation and sufferings, he does not stop short at the ethical. For Christ, and so for us, the ethical view gives place to the religious, because Christ's sense of its being His vocation to establish on earth a great ethical fellowship runs into the further sense of the supramundane God appointing Him to found the Kingdom, and to exercise lordship over it.

It was by this religious view of His vocation that Christ, according to Ritschl, was conscious of His unique and independent position among men. Ritschl is quite clear that Christ did hold an unique position, and that Christ was fully conscious of it. At the same time, Ritschl does not look on this position as so unique that it would be impossible for any other person to attain to the same kind of consciousness, though, as we shall see later, Ritschl does definitely assert that His distinctive consciousness of an unique relation to God can never be fully reproduced. The sense that Jesus

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 442. (E. T.)

had of His relation to God, and of His significance for men, is expressed by Ritschl in the following words :— ' Beyond all doubt, Jesus was conscious of a new and hitherto unknown relation to God, and said so to His disciples ; and His aim was to bring His disciples into the same attitude towards the world as His own, and to the same estimate of themselves, that under these conditions He might enlist them in the world-wide mission of the Kingdom of God, which He knew to be not only His own business but theirs.' [1] Moreover, Christ was conscious that that self-end which He set before Him was also God's self-end, and that He was known by God as revealing in His own life and work the purpose God had for the world. Ritschl sums up the relation existing between God and Jesus, as evidenced by the vocation and work of the latter, thus :—' Since as the Founder of the Kingdom of God in the world, in other words, as the Bearer of God's ethical lordship over men, He occupies an unique position towards all who have received a like aim from Him, therefore He is that Being in the world, in whose self-end God makes effective and manifest after an original manner His own eternal self-end, Whose whole activity, therefore, in discharge of His vocation, forms the material of that complete revelation of God which is present in Him, in Whom, in short, the Word of God is a human person.' [2]

In his *Instruction*, Ritschl argues that the significance of Jesus for His community is based on three facts, facts which are manifest in the Gospels, and which are truths of the life of Jesus and manifest to

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 386. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 451. (E. T.)

His consciousness. In the first place stands the fact that 'Jesus alone was qualified for His special calling, the introduction of the Kingdom of God.'[1] His consciousness of this finds expression in the famous passage where He speaks of the knowledge of the Father, and we can be sure that His consciousness was not at fault, by a consideration of His steadfastness and patience under sufferings. Secondly, the work which Jesus did in founding the Kingdom was the carrying out of the Divine purpose in the world. 'The solidaric unity between Christ and God, which Jesus accordingly claims for Himself, has reference to the whole extent of His activity in His calling, and consists therefore in the reciprocal relation between the love of God and the obedience of Jesus in His calling.'[2] Thus Jesus has for the community founded by Him the significance of being unique, 'alone of His kind,' since any similar doing of God's will in the future would be dependent on Him, and the love of God, which took Him for its immediate and original object, is mediated through Him to the community. The third attribute of Jesus which is of significance is His lordship over the world, which He lays claim to, and which, as being the peculiar prerogative of God, answers to the solidaric unity of Jesus with God. His world-dominion was not merely indirectly exercised by the foundation of the Kingdom of which He was to be Lord, but by His sufferings and death, in which He overcame the world. Ritschl, by explaining thus the significance of Christ for the community, finds something which he can substitute for the traditional view of the three offices of Christ—His

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 21. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, § 22. (E. T.)

Priesthood, Prophethood, and Kingship,—in which, formerly, the significance of Christ for His people was sought. This scheme of the three offices he is only willing to use with considerable reservations, of which the most important is that he places the office of King above the offices of Priest and Prophet, and includes these two in the former, viewing Christ's work from the standpoint of Kingship alone.

So far, there has been nothing in Ritschl's treatment of Christ's Person inconsistent with the orthodox doctrine, for the idea of Christ's own personal vocation is perfectly compatible with the ascription of real Deity to Him, while, though Ritschl may seem to be on more dangerous ground in his insistence on the likeness of Christ and Christians in their functions, he has but extended the emphasis which orthodox theologians of repute have preferred to lay on Christ's kinship with His people, rather than on His difference from them, an emphasis which found its place among the most orthodox Fathers of the early Church in the idea of the exaltation of human nature through its assumption by the Word of God, so that deification was to be the lot of Christian people.[1] Apart altogether from the special question of His Godhead, Christ, as presented to us in Ritschl's pages, so far as we have yet investigated, does not appear to be merely the divine Hero and the Ideal of humanity which He unquestionably was in the thought of many of Ritschl's nearest predecessors, and which M. Schoen would have us

[1] The writer does not, of course, mean to imply that the content of Ritschl's idea and that of the Fathers was the same. His wish is only to show that even among the strongest professors of orthodoxy the closest kinship between Christ and His people has been taught.

believe He essentially remains in Ritschl's own theology. The closeness of the relation between Jesus and God which Ritschl brings before us must be carefully marked, for it is a tremendous assertion to make concerning an historic Person, that, in following out His own vocation and own self-end, He was also, with full consciousness of the fact, accomplishing God's self-end in the world. An Unitarian conception of Christ's Person would not easily follow from so exalted a conception of His work. It will be well to keep these considerations in our minds while we engage in a more exact examination of Ritschl's doctrine of the Godhead of Christ.

Now in the first place, Ritschl will not have anything to do with the Chalcedonian definition, and the orthodox doctrine of the Person of Christ existing in two natures, one human, one divine. But his objection is certainly not taken in the interests of a barren humanitarianism, but from his clear insight into the fact, which can hardly escape the notice of intelligent students of early Christian doctrine, that, despite the various attempts to frame a satisfactory statement, no adequate account of the relation of the two natures was ever given. It is certainly the case—nor is the fact in the least surprising—that the Church was far more successful—and rightly successful—in its opposition to heretical interpretations of Christ's Person, than in its own positive dogmatic. Ritschl shows how, in the Western Church, even the genius of Aquinas found no means of passing beyond a conception 'of an undefined and indefinable relation between the mutable human nature and the immutable Divine Person in Christ, whereby the human nature is in

reality not affected.'[1] And he points out that the piety which went along with the orthodox doctrine practically set aside the divine Majesty of Christ in order to pour out the fulness of love and devotion upon the man Jesus, the Bridegroom of the soul, the fairest of the sons of men. In Luther's doctrine Ritschl descries a double strain; on the one hand he held firmly to the old orthodox Christology, which he attempted to support by the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*; but, on the other hand, he sought for Christ's Divinity in His life-work, and so did not merely assent to the presence of a divine nature by the side of the human nature. 'Luther's statements in the Catechisms,' writes Ritschl, 'amount to this, that while the Church formula is retained, it really is in Christ's human achievements that His Godhead becomes for His people manifest, conspicuous, intelligible, winning our faith, not in the form of assent to an unintelligible dogma, but of personal trust for our own salvation.'[2] To the doctrine of the kenosis of the Word Ritschl objects that it compels us to refuse the predicate of Godhead to the historic life of Christ. 'If the eternal Logos, by His conception as an individual man, emptied Himself of those attributes in which His original relation to the world is expressed, and in which He is of like essence with the Father, then in His historical existence He is not the possessor of Godhead.'[3] The whole of this type of doctrine suffers, for Ritschl, from the incurable defect that it prevents Godhead and manhood being predicated at the same time

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 390. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 394. (E. T.)
[3] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, pp. 408-409. (E. T.)

and in the same relation of the Person of Christ, thus proving the two predicates to be mutually exclusive.

Ritschl's own doctrine, then, is formed in contrast to the old Christology, and with the definite intention of making the doctrine of Christ's Godhead more religiously vital, and more intelligible when applied to the historical personality of Jesus Christ. He refuses the dilemma—either Christ is the union of divine and human nature, or else He is mere human nature. He looks round for some other sphere in which a doctrine of Christ's Godhead can be made intelligibly operative, and he finds what he is looking for, as indeed we might expect that he with his general preferences would, in the sphere of will, and in regard to Christ's work. And when, in his treatment, he affirms the Godhead of Christ, he is, and allows that he is, expressing a judgment of value, a fact that will shock only those who are committed past reasoning to the belief that a judgment of value is necessarily just the opposite of a judgment of existence. From a long and important paragraph on this special point we make the following quotations :—'If by trusting for my salvation to the power of what He has done for me, I honour Him as my God, then that is a value-judgment of a direct kind. It is not a judgment which belongs to the sphere of disinterested scientific knowledge, like the formula of Chalcedon. . . . The nature of God and the Divine we can only know in its essence by determining its value for our salvation. . . . We know God only by revelation, and therefore also must understand the Godhead of Christ, if it is to be understood at all, as an attribute revealed to us in His saving influence upon ourselves. We must first be able to prove the God-

head that is revealed before we take account of the Godhead that is eternal.'[1] He proceeds by strongly attacking those who would establish Christ's Godhead through an act of disinterested cognition, and apart from religious experience. He argues that the doctrine which they profess cannot possibly be established by their method, which is, as in effect he says, one of 'hysteron—proteron,' and would only be justified if they could expound what Christ's Godhead in its eternal essence is. Finally, he applies to this problem Luther's warning against teachers who would determine the things of God *a priori*, from above downwards, previous to all definite Divine revelation.

Not only is this a most important passage as illustrating Ritschl's thought, but it would be hard to deny the cogency of its argument. It is particularly relevant in view of such a remark as that of Dr. Orr's, that 'the religious value which God and Christ have to us depends on what God and Christ *are*.'[2] Surely so powerful a thinker as Dr. Orr must grasp the fact that the whole question is how we shall discover what God and Christ are, and that the Ritschlian proposition concerning their value is not opposed to another proposition concerning the nature of their being, but is simply a method of leading up thereto. However much we may ultimately conclude that Ritschl failed to construct a satisfactory dogmatic we can only praise him for his fidelity to the experimental method. Ritschl's real fault is, not that his method is wrong, but that he sometimes refuses to make inferences which, on his own premisses, are unavoidable. The following passage,

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 398. (E. T.)
[2] Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, etc., p. 247.

for instance, is quite admirable, as far as it goes, as a defence against opponents who attacked his method as necessarily leading to a denial of Christ's Godhead, because by it the attribute of Divinity was proved only of the will, but not of the nature of Christ. 'This distinction,' he writes, 'between nature and will is not religious but scientific. . . . In all other cases we estimate character on the supposition that its essence is manifest in the will.'[1] This is excellent, but Dr. Orr is in the right when he replies that the defect of Ritschl's theology is that it will not allow us to go back from the will to the nature.

We saw that the great objection taken by Ritschl to the kenotic doctrine, and, indeed, to the entire old Christology, was that it made of the Godhead and the manhood in the Person of Christ two mutually exclusive predicates. Ritschl makes no such division in the Person of Christ, but finds in the activities of His human life the assurance of His Deity. 'The attribute of Godhood,' he says, 'cannot be maintained unless the same activities in which Jesus Christ proves Himself man are thought of as being at the same time and under the same circumstances also peculiar predicates of God, and as the peculiar means of His revelation through Christ. But if the grace and faithfulness and dominion over the world, which are evident both in Christ's active life and in His patience in suffering, are also the actual attributes of God and those essential for the Christian religion, then the right appreciation of the completeness of the revelation of God through Christ is assured by the predicate of His Godhead, in accordance with which Christians are to trust in Him

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 466-467. (E. T.)

and to worship Him even as they do God the Father.'[1] Accordingly it is in the sphere of the ethico-religious life that Ritschl looks for the uniqueness of Jesus, and finds it in the complete victory over the world which He won; 'As the historic Author of this communion of men with God (*i.e.* in the Kingdom) and with each other, Christ is *necessarily unique in His own order*. For if a second could be produced who really was on a level with Christ in grace and truth, in world-conquering patience, in scope alike of purpose and achievement, he would yet stand in historical dependence upon Christ, and therefore, logically, would be dependent on Him.'[2] This passage indicates the attributes of Jesus in consequence of which Divinity is to be ascribed to Him, namely, grace and truth, steadfastness to His vocation by which He overcame the world, and lastly, the entire success which crowned His efforts.

Dr. Orr agrees with Ritschl's antagonists that to place the attribute of Godhead in the will and not the nature is to leave Jesus mere man. This conclusion does not necessarily follow from Ritschl's presentment of the case, but it must be owned that his rigid agnosticism, whenever the question of the origin of the Person of Christ is raised, gives occasion for attack. Ritschl does not appear to understand that it is not a characteristic of metaphysicians alone, but of ordinary persons also, to wish to find in the nature an explanation of transcendent moral and spiritual forces manifest in the will. He would lead people on so far, and no further, and bid them not waste time in a fruitless investigation of the mystery of the Person

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 24.
[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 465. (E. T.)

before them. 'The origin of the Person of Christ,' he writes, 'is not a subject for theological inquiry, because the problem transcends inquiry. . . . As Bearer of the perfect revelation, Christ is given us that we may believe on Him. When we do believe on Him, we find Him to be the Revealer of God. But the correlation of Christ with God His Father is not a scientific explanation.'[1] But in this 'voluntary humility,' as Dr. Garvie has so happily called it, Ritschl, as we saw above, is not justified even by his inadequate epistemology. When Ritschl argues in his pamphlet *Theologie und Metaphysik*, that a subject is only known by us in its predicates, so that, if we could leave on one side all the latter, the former would cease to have any place in our knowledge, he is on perfectly firm ground. But, seeing that Ritschl is not a subjective idealist, and, for all his contempt of 'the thing at rest,' and relegation of it to the most obscure corner, does not deny its existence apart from its manifestations to us, he should see that the assertion that things are known in their activities must connote a corresponding reality in the unknown thing at rest. But, unfortunately, he will not go so far as to predicate positively Godhead of the nature of Christ and then to leave it on one side as hidden from us; he refuses to assert anything at all concerning it. It cannot be surprising that in view of this, opponents should make the deduction, which is still, however, an unjustifiable deduction, that Ritschl really thought of Christ as, in nature, a man no different at all from other men.

Yet in one point Ritschl does break his silence with

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 451-452. (E. T.)

regard to the nature of Christ : he speaks of Christ's pre-existence, but so obscurely that the passages in which he does so have come to be weapons in the hands of those who would emphasise, even where they do not exaggerate, his distance from Catholic doctrine. He will not admit the presence of any doctrine of the personal pre-existence of Christ in those statements of St. Paul which seem most clearly to carry it. He is probably right in his interpretation of 1 Cor. viii. 6 ; it is likely that there is no suggestion of pre-existence in the verse in which St. Paul speaks of one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and it appears to refer more naturally to the exalted Christ. But his exegesis of Col. i. 14-20 is very unconvincing : to take one single instance, it cannot be said that his suggestion that πρό applies to place as fitly as time in the clause ' He is before all things ' is in the least sound. Nor again is it in the least natural to interpret ' through whom also He made the worlds ' in Hebrews i. 1-3 of the exalted Son of God, who had been predestined by God to be Lord of the world. Such and similar interpretations of Ritschl do not make us hopeful as to what we shall find on investigating his own thoughts on pre-existence. There are two statements of his, near together, which bear on the point. In the first he has been showing how the love of God falls originally on the Son alone, and how ' if these relations are eternally involved in God's will of love, it follows from our recognition of this fact, that the special significance Christ has for us is by no means exhausted in our appreciation of Him as a revelation conditioned by time. On the contrary, it is implied that, as the Founder and Lord

of the Kingdom of God, Christ is as much the object of God's eternal knowledge and will as is the moral unification of mankind, which is made possible through Him, and whose prototype He is: or rather, that not only in time, but in the eternity of the Divine foreknowledge and will, Christ precedes His community.' He ends up his argument with the declaration that 'if the Kingdom of God is the eternal object of the love of God, it is so because Christ . . . as the Head and Lord of the Kingdom, is the eternal object of the love of God, so that in this special form the Kingdom of God is present eternally to the Divine knowledge and will, while its individual members are the objects of the knowledge of God in time.' [1] We do not here approach at all to any doctrine of a real personal pre-existence of Christ, for the statement that He is the object of God's eternal foreknowledge as much as the moral unification of mankind points very much the other way: however, there is one more passage to which we can look for help, and in which Dr. Garvie thinks that Ritschl goes a step further. 'The eternal Godhead of the Son,' he writes, 'is perfectly intelligible only as object of the Divine mind and will, that is, only for God Himself. But if at the same time we discount, in the case of God, the interval between purpose and accomplishment, then we get the formula that Christ exists for God eternally as that which He appears to us under the limitations of time. But only for God, since for us, as pre-existent, Christ is hidden.' [2] Dr. Garvie holds that this points beyond an ideal pre-existence, but

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 468, 470. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 471. (E. T.)

there are important considerations on the other side. The fact that for God there is no interval between willing and fulfilling does not necessarily tell in favour of a real pre-existence, but may go to show that an ideal pre-existence is as real an one as thought can conceive, since it is actually effected in God's purpose, so that Christ's life on earth is outside temporal limitation for God. In this case Ritschl would seem for the moment to be almost Hegelian, in abandoning the category of time when dealing with divine things, and treating such a word as ' pre-existence ' as having really no meaning for God, Who views everything *sub specie æternitatis*. Besides, how can it possibly be said concerning what is generally meant by a *real* pre-existence of Christ, that He pre-exists for God as that which He appears to us under the limitations of time ? Such a phrase goes beyond any mere assertion that the historic Incarnation and work of Christ were eternally present to the mind of God. If Christ pre-existed, He certainly did not pre-exist *as* that which He appears to us under temporal limitations, that is, under the same conditions as those which obtained for Him in His earthly life. If He pre-existed, it was in some very different form, which St. Paul calls the ' form of God,' but of any such pre-existence Ritschl is quite silent. It is of course true that ' for us, as pre-existent, Christ is hidden,' but this does not give us any help towards Ritschl's positive meaning.

A consideration of Ritschl's Christology leads to the thought that he has not taken advantage of his opportunities. The empirical method with which he works and his insistence on the ethical sphere have very much to recommend them, and he might have

advanced to an exposition and interpretation of the doctrine of Christ's Godhead, which would really have preserved all that was valuable in the old dogmatic, all that Christian piety demanded, without the confusion that often arises from the form in which the old dogmatic is cast. But, partly owing to his theory of knowledge and dislike of what he considered metaphysics, partly, probably, through genuine inability to get beyond a certain point in his personal thought of Christ, his position on certain fundamental matters was thoroughly agnostic. It is not the fact that Ritschl made use of value-judging in forming his doctrine, which constitutes his fault: this would only be the case if it could be shown that there is a necessary opposition between judgments of value and judgments of existence. We need not echo Dr. Orr's remark that Ritschlianism 'asks us to value as God one who is not God in fact,'[1] nor admit Professor Denney's contention that in the Ritschlian system 'Jesus has for the scientific (as opposed to the religious) consciousness only the common real value of man.'[2] Dr. Garvie is quite right in saying as against all such statements that 'the critics of Ritschlianism assume that Christ may have the *worth* of God for us without *being* God: but this distinction between the *value* and the *existence* of God is one of those logical subtleties for which they alone can claim the credit, for the Ritschlian School is quite innocent of it.'[3] Ritschl's failure lies not in any distinction between value and existence, but in the

[1] Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, etc., p. 263.
[2] Denney, *Studies in Theology*, p. 14.
[3] Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 267.

content he finds in the term or idea of 'Godhead' as applied to Christ. Herrmann tells us,[1] and there is criticism implied in his statement, that Ritschl wished to understand by the Godhead of Christ only what might also be predicated of the Christian community. Ritschl was actuated by a true motive when he made it his object to find evidence of Christ's Deity in all that He did and suffered as man, and not merely in a divine nature existing by the side of the human. But, despite his real efforts, he does not secure the uniqueness of Christ in such a way as to make it of vital use to Christian piety. With his criticism of the doctrine of the two natures many would sympathise, but a far fuller faith in Christ's Deity than Ritschl gives us is possible alongside of the most strenuous refusal to think of Christ in terms of the Chalcedonian definition. And, as we shall see in the next chapter, Ritschl held no such view of Christ's atoning work as would have led him deeper into the mystery of Christ's Person: the defects in either presentation probably reacted on the other. It is now time to see whether any of the disciples supplied wholly, or in part, what the Master lacked.

Herrmann constantly speaks of the Godhead of Christ, and always in the spirit of deep conviction of the importance of the doctrine. What especially moves him is the feeling of the importance for mankind of the fact that in Jesus we have to deal with God Himself. His Christology might almost be thought of as a long expansion of the Pauline idea that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. So

[1] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, note to p. 273 (E. T.)

Herrmann can say that if the Godhead of Jesus were not true we should not have in Him a Redeemer.[1] In another place he speaks with approval of 'finding in God nothing but Christ.'[2] What he says of prayer to Christ is especially interesting: 'Prayer to Christ,' he writes, 'is a very delicate thing. It can very easily be misused. Its use is therefore by no means a sign of a special maturity and clearness of belief. It is in general a true prayer only when for the Christian at the moment of prayer every difference between the Person of Jesus and the One personal God is done away. He who truly prays must come to the fact that he is raised within to the One personal Spirit apart from Whom there is no God. If prayer to Christ is not to be elevation to this God, it is no Christian prayer.'[3] Herrmann follows Ritschl and Luther in approving of the experimental method which works up to a confession of Christ's Godhead by taking note of what Christ is found to be for a man's life; the thought that Jesus is God can be appropriated by him alone whom Jesus has led to break with his past, and enter on a new existence. Even more strongly than Ritschl does Herrmann oppose the formula of the two natures, for it seems to him to resolve a confession of the Deity of Christ into a mere admission that behind the human life stands the substance of Deity, wonderfully combined with it, and giving value to Christ's work,[4] whereas true faith

[1] Herrmann, *Worum handelt es sich in dem Streit um das Apostolicum*, p. 12.

[2] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 32. (E. T.)

[3] Herrmann, *Worum handelt es sich, u.s.w.*, p. 34.

[4] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 144. (E. T.)

sees in all that the man Jesus does the redeeming God. Herrmann's own attitude comes in more detail into view in the long excursus in his *Communion with God* on Luther's position with regard to Christological dogma ; for Herrmann fully assents to the new light which Luther cast on the problem, and makes Luther's attitude his own. He shows. then, that while the Deity of Christ was everything to Luther, he enriched the old dogma by his treatment of it. This he did in three chief ways. *First of all* he insisted on the unity of God and Christ, so that we must connect God in our thought with the man Jesus, and must not distinguish between God and the life of the man Jesus. Accordingly, we shall not be led to divorce the words and deeds of Jesus from the divine nature. Luther did not see in Christ merely a joining of divine essence to a human nature, but rooted himself in the faith that in the Person of Jesus we have the personal God. *Secondly*, Luther insisted that faith in Christ means confidence in Him, and that we do not need to distinguish faith in Christ's Person from faith in His work. Trust in Christ is the actual experience of redemption effected by the man Jesus, and this cannot be created by any determination to think of a divine as well as a human nature in Christ. *Finally*, Luther, though he treated the old Church dogma more seriously than any other man of his time, laid continual stress on the necessity of approaching it by the right method, namely, by advancing upwards to Christ's Deity from the historic life and work of Jesus. Luther's own words may here be quoted :— 'The Scriptures begin very gently, and lead us on to Christ as to a man, then afterwards to a Lord over all

creatures, and after that to a God. So do I enter delightfully and learn to know God. But the philosophers and the all-wise men have wanted to begin from above; and so have they become fools. We must begin from below, and after that come upwards.'[1]

Herrmann, like Ritschl, makes large use of the ethical sphere for the establishment of Christ's Godhead. But there is a warmer ring about his sentences than in Ritschl's statements, and though, like other members of the School, his sense of the defectiveness of the old formulæ prevents him from speaking of an actual Incarnation, his position is much nearer to orthodoxy than Ritschl's developed doctrine. While Ritschl tried to find the whole content of Christ's Godhead in His world-dominion, and the complete success with which He fulfilled His vocation, and set this up as an alternative to the old dogmatic, Herrmann abstains from any such attempt. Though the later editions of his great book do not contain the passage of the first edition, in which he says that 'the Christological decisions of the early Church still always mark out the limits within which attempts to follow out the question of the union of the human and divine must move,'[2] yet this does not necessarily imply that any other attempt has seemed to Herrmann more satisfactory. Occasionally we come across a phrase with an humanitarian sound, as when he says that 'we recognise that God is not only the God of Jesus Christ, —He is our own God.'[3] But such expressions which

[1] Quoted in Herrmann's *Communion*, etc., p. 165. (E. T.) Cf. the whole discussion, pp. 146-172.

[2] Quoted in Orr, *Ritschlianism, Critical and Expository Lectures*, p. 68.

[3] Herrmann, *Communion*, etc., p. 99. (E. T.)

make a separation between God and Jesus are very rare in him, and are not to be taken as witnesses to his deepest thought. In his work on *Religion in Relation to World-knowledge and Morality* he refuses to look to some metaphysical background behind the facts of Jesus' life for an absolute revelation of God, but he also maintains that 'the historic appearance of Jesus is so entirely an absolute revelation of God, that behind it there are no depths of the divine Being.' [1] In this same work Herrmann gives direct expression to his faith in a real, personal pre-existence of Christ. Dr. Garvie's translation of this important passage is given. 'I certainly hold,' he says, 'the conviction, which I need not here more closely justify, that faith in Christ is led in a natural advance to the representation of a pre-existence of Christ, and indeed a personal and not an ideal. The assumption of a so-called ideal pre-existence seems to me unjustified. It is surely manifestly the Person of the exalted Lord, the worth of which for the community and for the Kingdom of God is expressed in this, that it did not come to be within earthly conditions as we, but is independent of the world, which represents the fully dependent province of its dominion. This thought finds in the representation of a personal pre-existence of the Lord, it is true, a contradictory expression, and yet the only one that might be at our command, which, therefore, will have its saving truth. The contradiction will be removed when once the riddle of time has been solved for us, in which we now view our existence.' [2]

[1] Herrmann, *Die Religion, u.s.w.*, p. 399.

[2] Garvie, *Ritschlian Theology*, p. 292; Herrmann, *Die Religion, u.s.w.*, p. 438.

The force of this passage is not changed by the fact that at a conference at Eisenach he bade his hearers turn from the question of pre-existence with hearts cold as ice, a statement which does not imply disbelief in the doctrine, but distrust of much of the academic discussion about it, especially of its value as compared with more immediate and life-giving impressions of Jesus. Herrmann is certainly right in making the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence a result that must follow from an understanding of the character of His historic life and work, and which must not be asserted without reference to that life, and in detachment from experimental considerations. In general, we may say that Herrmann's Christology is not only in itself more satisfactory than Ritschl's, but leads on more naturally to the further conclusions by which the orthodox dogma has safeguarded the interests of vital Christian piety.

Kaftan's Christological view is set forth most clearly in the end of his pamphlet entitled *Brauchen wir ein neues Dogma?* ('Do we need a new Dogma?'), and a brief account of it may here be given. He starts by affirming that to the question 'What think ye of Christ?' Christian faith has only one answer—He is the Son of God. In Christ, God has revealed Himself, and made His dwelling in one of our race, and it is the glory of faith to be able to say to a man 'My Lord and my God.' Yet the Godhead of the Lord is understood differently in the Evangelical and Catholic Churches. In the title 'Godhead' a double significance may be found. It may imply that Christ has a special relation to God, and so is exalted above men for ever, or that He is so related to men that men through Him must come to know God. Either way may be the departure-

point for faith, but while the former is that for the old dogma, the latter is so for the Evangelical Church, that is, we know Christ's Godhead in its living, present relation to us and our faith. Kaftan goes on to insist on the Gospel-picture of Christ as the most valuable possession of evangelical Christianity as furnishing it with its knowledge of Christ's Godhead. 'We must make,' he says, 'the spiritual content of His exalted, divine life intelligible by the picture of His historic life.'[1] He admits that the evangelical faith in Christ's Godhead can only be preserved, if the belief that Jesus has His origin from above and not from below prevails. 'It is according to my view an inevitable consequence of the faith in the Lord's Godhead, that He, that His historic Person, stands in a connection of being with God which is unique and cannot be repeated. We cannot say to a man *God*—the word is too great and too weighty—if we do not really mean that the eternal God Himself has come to us in Him, and in Him has communion with us.'[2] He gives yet further expression to his thought as follows:—'If we believe in the Lord's Godhead, we believe also in His origin from above, out of God. He was a man—true, thereon depends our salvation. But He was *the* man, in whom God's eternal will was to unite humanity with itself, the divine Head of humanity made one with God; thereon equally depends our salvation. And so this unity of God with the one man Jesus Christ is a fact which cannot be done away with in the harmony of faith.'[3] At the same time he declares that attempts to render intelligible the origin of Jesus from God are theolo-

[1] Kaftan, *Brauchen wir, u.s.w.*, p. 56. [2] Kaftan, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
[3] Kaftan, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

gical speculations, but not faith. Kaftan does not accept the formula of the two natures, and in his *Truth of the Christian Religion* he shows himself distinctly opposed to any interpretation of the Person of Jesus through the Logos-idea, but his conception of Jesus, and his speculations concerning the origin of Jesus from above, in so far as he allows himself in these, are not easily reconcilable with any purely humanitarian or Unitarian theology.

Harnack, on the other hand, does unquestionably make a clear distinction between Jesus and God, to Whom he makes Jesus subordinate. In his famous lectures on *What is Christianity?* he tries to show that Jesus always ranged Himself with other men over against God, while in his *History of Dogma* he accounts for the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ which he allows that St. Paul held, and from which he maintains that all the later Christological and Trinitarian dogma sprang, by finding in it an explanation of the Person of Christ framed by St. Paul in dependence on the Jewish and Hellenic conceptions of pre-existence then afloat. Yet he admits that there is a mystery attaching to the Person of Jesus, a mystery which centres in the name 'Son of God,' by which Jesus called Himself. He admits that Jesus knew Himself to be Son of God as no one had ever been before. 'How He came to this consciousness of the unique character of His relation to God as a Son; how He came to the consciousness of His power, and to the consciousness of the obligation and the mission which this power carries with it, is His secret, and no psychology will ever fathom it.'[1] So he writes in one of the best-known passages of his

[1] Harnack, *What is Christianity?* pp. 131-132. (E. T.)

What is Christianity? and it does at least show that Harnack recognises that in Christ's uniqueness there is something which defies analysis and constitutes the supreme mystery of His Person.

The result of our investigation of the Ritschlian Christology has been to show that, however defective their theories may be, however unduly they maintain an agnostic silence on points where speech would seem necessary and unavoidable, they do not look on Jesus Christ as a mere man like other men. Even when we meet with a refusal to advance any speculative theories explanatory of His Person, we meet also with an entire recognition of the fact that His Person stands by itself and challenges an explanation. That they have been overmuch frightened by every suggestion of metaphysics is very apparent; it is also apparent that it is impossible to construct any adequate Christology without reference to the category of nature which they so sternly rule out. Yet, even here, if they had fully realised the truth for which they contended—that nature is revealed in will—they would not have shrunk from a clearer confession of the transcendental Godhead of Christ. But it is not fair to think of their sympathies as Unitarian: on the contrary, they care about the doctrine of Christ's Godhead, they find in it genuine value for the Christian community, and not only do they try to do it justice, but they claim to have preserved for Christianity by their method all, and more than all, that was preserved by the old dogmatic. This claim cannot really be justified, but that is not because their method is wrong in itself, but because it does not go far enough, and consequently makes an excessive use of the category of will, attempting to

confine Christian piety to an use of that category in connection with Christ's Godhead. But the protest against proofs of Christ's Godhead, which could in no way be verified by the experimental Christian consciousness was opportune. The defectiveness of the orthodox ecclesiastical method has been exposed with characteristic force by Dr. Forsyth—a theologian as far removed as possible from Unitarianism—in his book *Missions in State and Church*, in the address entitled *Final Judgment Full Salvation*. 'The Church,' he says, 'thought of the miracle of God's presence as a cosmic miracle of birth rather than as a moral miracle of grace, a miracle of holiness, conflict, death, judgment, and victory. It has sought the Divine in Christ's hypostatic nature rather than in His conscience, and its atoning work for man's guilty conscience.'[1] Ritschl, Herrmann, and Kaftan have done well to see Christ's Deity in all that He did ; it is the more regrettable that they did not pass on to explicit recognition of the truth that, if Christ's Godhead is present in His actions, it must also be present in His nature, and that if this latter proposition is not admitted, the former will lose its power, and Jesus cease to be thought of as the man—to borrow one of Herrmann's favourite ideas—in dealing with Whom we deal with God Himself.

No member of the School has anything approaching to an adequate doctrine of the Holy Spirit ; indeed, the very small part which any conception of the Holy Spirit has in the Ritschlian theology is most remarkable. For Ritschl the Holy Spirit 'is the power of God which enables the community to appropriate His

[1] Forsyth, *Missions in State and Church*, pp. 68-69.

self-revelation as Father through His Son.'[1] The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God 'is the knowledge God has of Himself, as of His own self-end. The Holy Spirit denotes in the New Testament the Spirit of God, in so far as the latter is the ground of that knowledge of God, and that specific moral and religious life, which exist in the Christian community.'[2] Ritschl opposes the idea that the Holy Spirit is a substance or a resistless natural force, while he affirms that the basis for the Christian's freedom over the world may be placed in the Holy Spirit.[3] He attacks Evangelical theologians for the vagueness with which they hold the conception of the Holy Spirit, but it cannot be said that his own view of the Spirit as the knowledge which God has of Himself, and also as an attribute of the Christian community, is either a fair presentation of New Testament conceptions, or particularly intelligible in itself. He strenuously denies Weiss's assertion that he removes the Holy Spirit from the body of Christian doctrine; he insists truly enough on the necessity of finding the Holy Spirit in the functions of the Christian life,[4] but, whether in relation to God or to the community, the Holy Spirit is for him never more than an attribute. Ecke regarded Ritschl's utterances on the Holy Spirit as a foreign element in his theology, and Harnack, in his article *Ritschl und seine Schule* (Ritschl and his School,) which is a review of Ecke's book, agrees that Ritschl's remarks are unsatisfactory and surprisingly scanty.[5]

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 273. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 471. (E. T.)
[3] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 534. (E. T.)
[4] Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 44.
[5] Harnack, *Reden und Aufsätze*, vol. ii. p. 358.

Herrmann says but little of the Holy Spirit in the majority of his works; but in articles in the *Theologischer Litteraturzeitung* (Theological Literary Journal) quoted by Ecke, and from him by Dr. Garvie,[1] he advances beyond Ritschl, and, refusing to interpret the Holy Spirit as merely the spiritual life of the community, declares that the Christian who is conscious of the Holy Spirit is conscious of being moved by a supramundane power. Kaftan also insists on the work of the Holy Spirit in the spirit of man, and speaks of the activity of the Spirit as the continuation of the revelation of Christ, on which, however, it depends. Herrmann and Kaftan do not give us an adequate doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but they avoid what in Ritschl amounts to an almost rationalistic denial of the orthodox doctrine.

Ritschlianism has no place for the Trinitarian doctrine of three Persons in one substance. Ritschl approves of Melanchthon's statement as to the valuelessness of speculation on the mutual activities of the Persons of the Godhead, but he himself never gets so far as to assert the Trinitarian relation at all. Some of his ideas, as, for instance, that the love of God is directed primarily towards His Son, might, if logically worked out, have led him on in the direction of positive Trinitarianism, which is rooted in the belief that God as Love must throughout eternity possess an Object of His love, an Object which, as we are dealing with extratemporal realities, must have its place within the Godhead itself. But Ritschl made no such use of his ideas, and in the Trinitarian formula of Matt. xxviii. 19, refuses to

[1] Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 346.

see anything but a reference to the revelation of Himself which God gives through His Son, and which is appropriated by the community through its spiritual consciousness, termed the 'Holy Spirit.'[1] Kaftan does indeed say that 'Christian faith in God is faith in the three-one God. That is the expression, alike simple and yet all-comprehending, of the Christian truth of faith,'[2] but Dr. Orr shows that his position approximates more closely to Sabellianism than to the orthodox doctrine.[3] The truth is, that of all the great Christian doctrines the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is the one of which the Ritschlians make—and are able to make—least use. Their general method keeps them away from a doctrine which, though we may not call it metaphysical, is eminently transcendental, and which, in its systematised form at least, can only with difficulty be associated with the continually verifying power of Christian experience.

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 273. (E. T.)

[2] Quoted from *Das Wesen der christlichen Religion*, in Orr, *Christian View of God and the World*, p. 262.

[3] Orr, *Christian View*, etc., p. 461.

CHAPTER IX

THE RITSCHLIAN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY: II. THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

If the first part of dogmatic theology centres round, and springs from the answer to the question 'What think ye of Christ?' no less certainly can the second part be introduced by the question 'How shall a man be righteous before God?' The central question in the first part concerns God, in the second, man. Our task is now to present the main points of the Ritschlian teaching on the great subjects of sin, redemption, justification, the new life, and future destiny. There can be no doubt that Ritschl's own teaching, with which we shall be mainly concerned, is complicated, and often obscure, and Dr. Orr, who has made a most careful survey of this part of his teaching, is able to show that his conclusions are often very different from what we should expect in view of his premisses, while at times he does not escape self-contradiction. Yet, despite the confusion which prevails in places, a coherent view of Ritschl's thought is possible, and it is the present writer's desire—without going into the minutiæ of the system, which would entail an analysis of a large portion of Ritschl's great constructive work—to give, in as clear and

orderly fashion as is possible, an account of the main positions which the Göttingen theologian adopted and developed.

With regard to the doctrine of sin, the first position that Ritschl takes up is that it is impossible to form a proper idea of sin except by comparison with the idea of the good. 'The idea of the perfect common good included in the conception of the Kingdom of God, and the idea of personal goodness included in our conception of God, and in our view of Jesus Christ, lay the foundation in the Christian community for a corresponding idea of evil and sin. . . . It is impossible to arrive at the view of sin which is in accordance with Christianity, before arriving at the knowledge of what Christianity regards as good. Therefore it is a peculiarly inconsiderate demand that one shall recognise his own and universal sin in their full extent, in order from this first to derive a longing for a redemption such as is promised in Christianity.'[1] But, though Ritschl thus insists on comparing sin with the common good, he does not pretend that thereby a full conception of the character of sin is obtained, for sin has two aspects—a religious and a moral, and on the religious side sin is to be contrasted, not with the moral law, but with the providence of God. 'An action,' he says, 'is sin when it springs from indifference towards God, as the Benefactor and Governor of human life. By bringing out this aspect we stamp sin as a religious idea, as a characteristic value-notion.'[2]

In connection with sin Ritschl's most valuable positive idea is his formation of the conception of a

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 26 and note. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 334. (E. T.)

kingdom of sin, which he opposes to the Kingdom of God. The subject of sin is *humanity as the sum of all individuals*, in so far as the selfish action of each person, involving him as it does in illimitable interaction with all others, is directed in any degree whatsoever towards the opposite of the good, and leads to the association of individuals in common evil.'[1] Neither Pelagius' view, according to which each person, considered, independently of all others, as committing a number of acts of sin, is the subject of sin, nor Augustine's opposed conception, in which humanity as a natural species is, owing to the transgression of the first parent of the race, conceived to be the subject of sin, satisfies Ritschl. What he looks for is the recognition of the fellowship of many persons in sin, of that 'thoroughgoing reciprocation which marks sinful action throughout the human race.' The kingdom of sin, which Ritschl substitutes as an idea in place of the earlier theories, includes all the various grades of habitual sin, and enables us to gain a sense of the unending results which flow from our own sins and the sins of others in their mutual action and reaction. Sin thus becomes an organised whole, set over against the Kingdom of God and threatening it both in its religious and moral aspects. Ritschl has certainly done well in expressing by this new idea of the kingdom of sin the fact that sin cannot be regarded as merely a matter of a number, however great, of isolated acts, and in showing the way to a profounder conception, under which it will be impossible to conceive of sin as a mere negation of the good, or as positive good undeveloped. 'Sin,' as he excellently observes, 'is not an original

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 335. (E. T.)

law of the human will, for it is the striving, desiring, and acting against God. . . . The "law of sin" in the will is a result of the necessary reaction of every act of the will upon the direction of the will-power.'[1] The idea of the kingdom of sin does justice to the fact that there is in the world an anti-moral force, manifested in particular acts of sin, and yet something more than these, which hinders the realisation of the good.

But it must be admitted that, praiseworthy though Ritschl's doctrine is in itself, it was framed, partly, at least, to make up for the exclusion of the doctrine of original sin from his theological system. Ritschl is willing to allow that even a child, who is born of Christian parents into the community of Christ, is 'at the same time put into connection with evil, against which his natural will as such does not contend,'[2] but he rejects entirely the Augustinian doctrine of original sin, by which he understands that 'the original inclination to evil transmitted in generation is for every one both personal guilt and subject to the divine decree of eternal punishment,'[3] and for which he finds no basis in the New Testament, not even in the fifth chapter of Romans. He repudiates any universal necessity of sinning, and explains the fact of universal sin as the result of the combination of the impulse to the unrestrained exercise of freedom with the manifold attractions to self-seeking which arise from the sin of society. He does not deny that St. Paul thought of death as the result of sin, and that the doom of death

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 348-349. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 27. (E. T.)
[3] Ritschl, note on § 27 of *Instruction*, etc. (E. T.)

imposed on all men was dependent on the sin of Adam, but on the other hand, St. Paul 'does not say a word about the transmission of sin and the inheritance of bias by natural generation,' and 'he offers no other reason for the kingdom of sin than the sinning of all individual men.'[1] In Ritschl's positive objections to the doctrine of original sin we find the same dislike to the conception of a passive substance or nature behind phenomena, which has met us in other parts of his work. 'Actual sins,' he says, 'are more than manifestations or accidents of original sin in the individual. . . . Individual actions which are traced back to the will as their source, are not phenomena of will which may or may not exist without changing its nature; rather, through actions, according to the direction they take, the will acquires its nature and develops into a good or an evil character.'[2] Apart from this belief, which he looks upon as completely opposed to the doctrine of original sin, Ritschl thinks that responsibility for evil could no longer be affirmed of us, education would be impossible, and the fact of different degrees of evil in individuals inexplicable. What is valuable in Ritschl's whole argument on original sin is his protest against the Christian Church being bound down to an acceptance of the Augustinian version of the doctrine; to mention only one feature in Augustine's teaching, his notorious mistranslation of Romans v. 12, a mistranslation which, it is to be feared, still influences the thought of large numbers of Christians, makes it impossible for us to adopt his doctrine as a whole; but Ritschl is too much inclined

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 345, 348. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, pp. 336-337. (E. T.)

to think that the truth of *any* doctrine of original sin falls, when once it has been shown that Augustinianism is unsatisfactory. Ritschl has an illuminating piece of exegesis with regard to Romans v. 18, 19, in which he argues—and with success, in the present writer's opinion—that St. Paul's doctrine of the justification of all men in Christ was prior to, and the cause of his doctrine of all men being adjudged sinners in Adam ; but it is hardly fair to say that the Apostle's idea of mankind's sinfulness in Adam is obscure. It cannot be doubted that St. Paul firmly believed in this latter doctrine, though it may not be easy to present his thought on the subject as a coherent and logical whole. In view of the uncertainty which at present surrounds the question of original sin, Ritschl's attack on the doctrine cannot be regarded as one of his most serious mistakes, but it must be allowed that in his desire to safeguard individual freedom and responsibility he has inclined overmuch to the Pelagian side, though in justice to Ritschl it must be said that he looks on himself as opposing Pelagianism no less than Augustinianism. Dr. Garvie points out that both Harnack and Kaftan show much more sympathy towards the old doctrine. Kaftan is particularly definite when he asserts that ' sin reigns over us by nature, not we have sin, but sin has us,' and that ' our nature is sinful from youth up, and yet we feel ourselves in our conscience responsible for the evil that we do.' [1]

Besides the doctrine of original sin, Ritschl also rejects the idea of any present punishment of sin by God, especially in the way of material evils. This idea rests, in Ritschl's opinion, on a false conception of

[1] Quoted in Garvie, *Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 306-307.

the wrath of God, so it will be necessary first to see where he finds the error of the traditional doctrine to lie, and what he substitutes for it. We saw in the last chapter that Ritschl subordinates all other conceptions of God to the conception of Him as Father, and makes His desire for the salvation of men and determination to found His Kingdom, flow from His love. Now there have been other theologians who have done as much justice as Ritschl to the truth 'God so loved the world,' who have yet been able to combine it with a very real belief in the present wrath of God against sin. But Ritschl will not admit this at all :—'According to Scripture,' he writes, 'we are not justified in regarding God's wrath as an altered form of His love, nor in relating it to sin as such ; according to the New Testament, God's wrath signifies His determination to destroy those who definitively set themselves against redemption and the final end of the Kingdom of God. The authority of Holy Scripture gives us no right to relate the wrath of God to sinners as such, for *ex hypothesi* we conceive sinners to be known and chosen by God, as partakers in His Kingdom and objects of His redemption from sin.'[1] To the rather obvious reply that though God loves sinners and desires their conversion, yet, so long as they refuse to give up their sin, His wrath is turned towards them, Ritschl has an answer ready. If it is God's eternal purpose to save men, then at no point in their existence can He be considered as manifesting His indignation against them. He will not grant that the same persons can be at one stage of their existence ἀπολλύμενοι and at another σῳζόμενοι, for the result of this would be

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 323. (E. T.)

what Ritschl considers the manifest absurdity of supposing that God 'eternally resolves to bless those whom in a temporal degree He condemns in Adam.' Ritschl even claims the support of St. Paul for this view of his, or, rather, professes to be interpreting St. Paul's thought, though it is quite impossible to suppose that St. Paul did not think of his Corinthian converts as ἀπολλύμενοι when they were adulterers, idolaters and so forth as described in 1 Cor. vi. 9. Even if the attempt be made to look at the question *sub specie aeternitatis*, Ritschl's position is religiously unsound, for it makes God's will far too static in character, and does not allow that God views men, considered as individuals, in different lights according as they are or are not reconciled to Him.

It might be thought that the fact that so much of religious experience goes contrary to his position would have weighed with Ritschl. For there can be no doubt that all down the ages there have been those who have felt themselves to be the objects of God's righteous anger in view of their sins, and who, later, have come to the consciousness of forgiveness, and of God's face turned towards them in benediction and love. But Ritschl, most unfortunately, tries to explain away these experiences, since they conflict with his theology. He says that 'all our reflections about God's wrath and compassion, His long-suffering and patience, His severity and sympathy, are based upon a comparison of our individual position with God's, under the form of time. However indispensable these judgments may be in the texture of our religious experience, still they stand in no relation whatever to the theological conception of the whole from the

view-point of eternity.' And, lower down, speaking of the redeemed, he writes, 'If we assume that God foresees their final inclusion in His Kingdom, as theologians we have no alternative but to trace their redemption back to His love in an unbroken line, even though these very redeemed ones may, as their ideas take a temporal form, have the impression of a change from Divine wrath to Divine mercy.'[1] Surely Ritschl has here quite failed to sound the depths of the profoundest Christian experience. For though he does not say it in so many words, his statements just quoted can only imply that the religious experiences of these men—among whom may be numbered some of the greatest Christians—have been illusions. But this is indeed a perilous assumption on the part of a Christian theologian, in making which he has, despite his assertions to the contrary, the New Testament as well as religious experience against him, a fact clearly brought out by Pfleiderer in his examination of the Biblical foundations of Ritschlianism.[2] Moreover, it is astonishing how Ritschl, with all his dislike of metaphysics, relies on a metaphysical conception of the eternity of God, as changelessness of purpose, to undermine the testimony of experience.

Such being Ritschl's view of the wrath of God, it is quite natural that he should refuse to connect the evils of life in any sense whatever with a punishment of sin by God. As we shall see later, Ritschl does not go so far as to say that there is, here and now, no punishment of sin—though that would follow logically from his ideas concerning the wrath of God—but in

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 322-323. (E. T.)

[2] Pfleiderer, *Die Ritschl'sche Theologie*. See especially pp. 55, 60.

such punishment he does not allow any place at all to the evils of life. He admits that evils are, directly or indirectly, the result of sin. 'But the view of the pre-Christian world, which regarded great common misfortunes as divine punishments, and therefore as necessarily the result of unusual transgression against the gods, and the corresponding principle that all evils without exception are consequences of personal sins and are divine punishments, are in part out of harmony with experience and in part contrary to the view of the world set forth by Christ.'[1] Elsewhere he argues against any connection of material evils with sin, by denying to the former any religious conception. But of all his contentions on this subject much the most remarkable is the one by which he tries to show that, as the evils of life may have an educative influence in certain cases, they cannot in any cases be regarded as penal in character. Now the old view of punishment, a view which has not been proved to be untenable, is that it is essentially retributive, but, by being accepted in the right spirit, may lose its penal character and take on the nature of educative chastisement; in other words, it may begin as τιμωρία and continue as κόλασις. As one of the consistent champions of this view was Kant, it cannot be accused of being, in any special way, theological or ecclesiastical. Ritschl, however, will not hear of it. The two propositions which it contains are 'unlike in form, and heterogeneous in their ruling principles. *Earthly evils* are conceived of as *punishments for sin*, without any stress being laid on the consideration whether those

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 32. (E. T.)

who are punished feel and acknowledge them as punishments or not. For the guilt of sin (*reatus*) is understood as meaning merely the *obligatio ad poenam* imposed by the legislator and judge, not the subjective acknowledgment of the righteousness of the punishment. On the other hand, *earthly evils* are interpreted as *educative penalties*, because the reconciled sinners necessarily view them in the same sense as that in which God inflicts them. In their ruling principles the two propositions are heterogeneous. For the view which regards evils as means of education and trial is governed by the idea of the Divine love, as the highest moral end ; the view which regards them as punishment denotes a simple legal procedure. . . . The older theology, moreover, treats these two so heterogeneous propositions in such a way that the judicial punishment of sin by God appears the rule, the moral education of the reconciled by suffering the exception. That is the sole relationship to one another in which the two propositions are placed.' [1]

The above is a most instructive passage and peculiarly illustrative of Ritschl's thought on these questions. We notice first of all the latent assumption that a punishment can possess a genuinely penal, *i.e.* retributive character only if the penal value is acknowledged by the individual punished. But this is to mistake the very essence of retributive punishment, which is primarily concerned with the one fact that the evil does deserve punishment and must be punished, a truth explained in the Greek aphorism δράσαντα παθεῖν. It is, of course, quite obvious that the full purpose of punishment has not been achieved unless the evil-

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 47-48. (E. T.)

doer understands that the suffering he experiences is a punishment for his wickedness, but it is quite possible to imagine cases of punishment where the connection between wrongdoing and suffering is apprehended in but a slight degree by the individual in question, and other cases where the connection is not apprehended at all. This brings us to the second noteworthy fact; namely, that Ritschl insists on looking at retributive punishment from a strictly legal point of view, and on opposing such punishment as legal to educative chastisement which he considers to be moral. But it is quite untrue that retributive punishment has originally anything to do with legal procedure; it so happens that the notion of punishment as retribution dominates—very possibly dominates too much—the courts of law; but retributive punishment is essentially rooted in the demands of the moral consciousness, and is an idea which, whether for approval or refutation, belongs to the moral sphere. Ritschl tries to refute this by arguing that whereas 'every end is determined as a moral end by the fact that it must likewise be conceived as a means to other ends which concern men . . . the interpretation of evils as punishments carries with it the implication that, on the principle of retribution, they are an end in themselves.' [1] Now this piece of reasoning not only converts the idea of judgment into a wholly non-moral idea, whereas in the New Testament there is nothing more realistically ethical than the note of judgment, but it also makes the moral character of any end depend upon the tendency of that end to promote man's advantage in further respects. We

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 47-48. (E. T.)

need not look on these 'other ends' of which Ritschl speaks as non-ethical in nature, but it is necessary to insist that his whole conception is far too exclusively anthropocentric. If Ritschl had recognised that the righteousness of God in the New Testament is not merely 'the measure of the distinctive action by which the community of Christ is brought into existence, and is led on to its completion,'[1] if, in fact, he had seen that it could not be identified with grace, he would have understood that it may be more necessary for God to vindicate His own righteousness and the demands of the moral law than to advance the interests of man; and that therefore in this world, which is a microcosm of the divine, there may be times, as in the dealing out of retributive punishment, when the upholding of the sanctity of the moral law may be an end in itself, and not, in addition, 'a means to other ends which concern men.' Hence, to return once more to the passage with which we have been dealing, it is not necessary to look on the conception of evils as penal retribution, and the conception of them as educative chastisements, as heterogeneous propositions. If we conceive of these propositions as two, then we must say that both belong to the same sphere—that of morals. But it is truer to look on them as not two propositions at all, for there is no such dualism when all that is said is that an evil inflicted for one definite reason, namely, in the interests of retributive justice, changes its character, *so far as the subject is concerned*, by the change of his attitude. If Ritschl had contented himself with maintaining that we cannot conclude from manifest evils to hidden sin, and that,

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 16. (E. T.)

even where a notorious sinner suffers grievous loss, we have no right to assert with confidence that it is a judgment on his sin, he would have been on strong ground, and could have appealed to our Lord's authority, but he has certainly failed to prove his case that there can never be any such connection between earthly evils and sin as would justify us in looking on the former as the punishment of the latter.

In dealing with this question of the relation of earthly evils to sin, we may notice in particular Ritschl's attitude towards death. The Christian consciousness as a whole has followed St. Paul in connecting death with sin. But Ritschl declines to give death any religious significance at all. It is true that by saying that, for the Christian, death is not the greatest evil, he seems to admit that death may be an evil in a minor degree, but, when we remember that Ritschl considers the ideas of sin and evil to be heterogeneous, we shall decide that Ritschl saw in death no fact that had its place in the religious sphere, as well as in the sphere of natural science. Besides this, he makes use of the undoubted fact that for the true Christian death has lost its terrors to argue against an essential relation of death to sin. 'In the case of the reconciled,' he writes, 'there is not that fear of death which is an evidence of the bondage in which mankind lay before the time of Christ, and which testifies to man's recognition of an affinity between his own sin and death.'[1] Ritschl certainly seems guilty of a false abstraction here, putting sin into one world—the moral, and death into another—the physical, and allowing of no interconnection. Professor Denney has argued with great

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 358. (E. T.)

force that we have no right thus to split up human life into the 'natural' and 'moral' and fix an impassable gulf between. The distinction between 'natural' and 'moral' is not final, though legitimate within limits. 'Sin and death do not belong to unrelated worlds. As far as man is concerned, the two worlds, to use an inadequate figure, intersect; and at one point in the line of their intersection sin and death interpenetrate. In the indivisible experience of man he is conscious that they are parts or aspects of the same thing.'[1] The fact is that Ritschl's attempt to put 'sins' and 'evils' into separate hermetically sealed compartments is not successful. Death has a specifically religious aspect: it presents a problem to the religious mind; it is something which has to be overcome in the strength of religion, something which, in itself, is a challenge to religion. Ritschl, like Professor Burkitt, is not prepared to accept St. Paul's statement on the relations of sin and death, merely because it is St. Paul's. Whether St. Paul was right or wrong, his authority ought not to be set up as binding on Christians, and here Ritschl's protest is right. But, as Ritschl allows, the sense of the religious significance of death extends back beyond St. Paul, and it is unfortunate that he has not been able to do more justice to one of the deepest instincts of men.[2]

Ritschl, however, does not wish to imply that there is no punishment here and now for sin. He is aware of the fact that men who have sinned do habitually look on evils that befall them as just punishment for their sin. We have seen that he questions the validity of

[1] Denney, *The Atonement and the Modern Mind*, pp. 64-65.
[2] See Note F.

this religious reflection ; yet he tries to do justice to the fact which inspires it. Now this fact is the sinner's consciousness that, through his sin, he has forfeited the right of Divine sonship, and the consequent sense of separation from God. This sense Ritschl is prepared to regard as real punishment. 'The continuance of unforgiven guilt, whether felt more or less strongly or even not at all, is to be regarded as Divine punishment in the fullest sense, as the real condemnation, in so far as it is connected with that lack of trust in God which gives expression to separation from God.'[1] 'The unrelieved feeling of guilt is not so much one penal state among others, but is itself actually that of which all external penal evils are but the concomitant circumstances.'[2] Ritschl is right in regarding separation from God as the most terrible result of sin, and as punishment ; nor must we imagine that, for him, this sense of separation is nothing but a subjective change in man's spiritual life, a representation analogous to those conceptions of God's wrath and pity which he has refused to consider objectively real. For Ritschl clearly holds that such separation from God is the necessary result of sin, and that penitence and forgiveness alone can remove the penal condition. But this is equivalent to saying, if not that God withdraws Himself from the sinner, yet, at least, that this sense of separation consequent on sin is agreeable to and in harmony with God's will. Indeed, at the end of his long discussion on the Doctrine of Sin, Ritschl appears willing to allow something more than a subjective impression in man's sense of evils as punishment, so

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 33. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 365. (E. T.)

closely does he couple them with the real punishment involved in the loss of the privileges of Divine sonship. The passage, which contains the second result of his whole investigation, is worth quoting :—' Of the evils which make themselves perceptible as hindrances to human freedom, those have the significance of Divine punishments—presupposing the Divine government of the world—which each individual, through his unrelieved consciousness of guilt, imputes to himself as such—that consciousness of guilt, as expressive of the lack of religious fellowship with God, being itself already the initial manifestation of punishment as the forfeiture of the privilege of Divine sonship.' [1]

The above passage is of great importance in view of the charge brought against Ritschl of identifying guilt with the guilt-consciousness, and allowing it no reality apart from that. This charge has been preferred by Dr. Orr, though it must be said that he does not strike quite the same note in all his writings. Thus, in one place, he says that Ritschl's doctrine of guilt is conceived of, first, as a guilt-*consciousness*, and secondly as real separation from God : [2] in his *Christian View of God and the World* he argues from Ritschl's view of sin as ignorance, of which we shall say more presently, that, for Ritschl, wrong acts are not properly sins at all, and so ' the guilt attaching to these acts is but a feeling in the sinner's own consciousness, separating him from God, which the revelation of God's Fatherly love in the Gospel enables him to overcome.' [3] But it is in an article on *Ritschl and his Critics* that Dr.

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 384. (E. T.)
[2] Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, etc., pp. 146-147.
[3] Orr, *Christian View of God and the World*, p. 179.

Orr expresses most clearly his belief that in Ritschl's system no place is found for 'real guilt.' There he writes, 'As ordinarily understood, guilt is assumed to carry with it, nay, to find its peculiar character in, something further, viz., the liability to punishment (*obligatio ad poenam*); and the consciousness of guilt, in like manner, is held to involve the sense of evil desert, of punishableness, of righteous subjection to the judgment of a holy God. This also is the Scriptural view. The sinner there is represented as lying under the just judgment of God, as condemned, as exposed to the wrath of God for his sins. *This element in the idea of guilt Ritschl undeniably eliminates*, or reduces to subjective illusion; and it is *in this sense* that he is accused of weakening, and virtually annulling, the idea of guilt.'

The kernel of Dr. Orr's remarks is to be found in his equating guilt with liability to punishment, and in his condemnation of Ritschl for not admitting this. Now it is quite true that Ritschl does not grant objective validity to the sinner's sense of the wrath of God directed against himself, but we have also seen that he speaks of the separation from God, which results from sin, as 'Divine punishment in the fullest sense.' If we put these ideas together we shall come to the conclusion that Ritschl is not averse from the conception of punishment by God, but does not look on such punishment as the outcome of God's wrath, and, as we have also observed—though his meaning is not always quite clear—does not find this punishment manifested in material evils, which are quite secondary to the fact of separation from God. Therefore Ritschl

[1] Orr, *Ritschlianism, Critical and Expository Essays*, p. 102.

does not deny that sin is liable to punishment, that is, does not deny that sin involves real guilt. If any one will study really carefully Ritschl's discussions on the 'Forgiveness of sins as the removal of the separation of the sinner from God acknowledged in the feeling of guilt,' and on 'Forgiveness of sins as removal of guilt,' he will, we think, admit that, while Ritschl does not always express his meaning clearly, yet he does draw a distinction between guilt and guilt-consciousness. Such a passage as the following is only intelligible on this assumption, for in it he expressly allows that the consciousness of guilt may vanish, and the guilt remain and become greater. 'The removal of the consciousness of guilt must be so interpreted that it includes the removal of real guilt. For were this not so, even hardening might be conceived as a species of forgiveness. But this is absurd, for hardening denotes that situation of the sinner which is farthest removed from forgiveness.'[1] Another passage, equally decisive, may be quoted:—'In the Christian sense, guilt denotes that contradiction of God on which the individual as well as the totality of mankind has entered through the non-fulfilment of the moral law, and which is recognised as present through the consciousness of guilt in which the individual feels with pain the unworthiness of his own sin as well as his share in the guilt of all.'[2] The result of our investigation is that Dr. Orr cannot be held to have proved his case against Ritschl in this matter.

What we have to mark last of all in Ritschl's doctrine of sin is his view of sin as ignorance; all sin, that is,

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 57. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 58. (E. T.)

except final irrevocable decision against the good. He does not mean thereby to deny that sin is really sin, nor does he pretend that ignorance explains all the facts of sin. 'Ignorance,' he says, 'is not the sufficient ground for the confirming of the will in sin; for the will and knowledge are not wholly commensurable with one another.'[1] But as Ritschl believed that a sinner who realised all that his sin implied would be outside the love of God, as having deliberately chosen evil for his end, he could not but hold that into every sin capable of being forgiven ignorance entered, nay, rather, was its essential characteristic. 'The love of God,' he writes, 'can be conceived in relation only to such sinners as have not fallen into that degree of sin which excludes conversion of the will. It is just this negative relation that is expressed by the predication of ignorance—and nothing more.'[2] By this doctrine of sin as ignorance Ritschl intends to express what is implied in the ordinary conception of *venial* sin, and we have therefore no right to argue from it to any palliation of sin on Ritschl's part. But we may doubt whether the idea in itself is an useful one, and whether it does not seem to lessen the saving power of the love and grace of God.

Passing from sin to forgiveness, we find Ritschl at complete variance with those theologians who would make of forgiveness a truth of natural religion and deduce it from the love of God alone. 'Forgiveness of sins,' he writes, 'cannot be inferred as necessary from any universally established conception of God.'[3]

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 378. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 383. (E. T.)
[3] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 39. (E. T.)

He refutes the Socinian position, which would detach forgiveness from all connection with Christ's personal work. To their appeal to the fact of forgiveness in the Old Testament he replies that the men of the Old Testament looked for proofs of forgiveness in deliverance from material ills. As, however, the Old Testament anticipations were not verified, the Socinian appeal to the Old Testament against connecting forgiveness with the work of Christ breaks down. Herrmann fully agrees with Ritschl, and denounces as the grossest misrepresentation of Ritschl's theology the charge that he based Divine forgiveness simply on the fact that God is love. The effect of forgiveness is to wipe away the guilt which separates man from God, and restore to man the prerogative of Divine sonship. 'As an attribute of the Christian community, forgiveness implies that men may enjoy fellowship with God in spite of their sins and in spite of the intensifying of their sense of guilt.'[1] Thus forgiveness may be conceived of as the removal of guilt, and the restoration of that fellowship between God and man which sin has destroyed. It is essentially reconciliation.

Ritschl not only connects forgiveness with Christ, but agrees with the whole Church in finding a special relation between forgiveness and Christ's death. As a Christian he could not do less, but it must be regretfully admitted that all Ritschl's influence is thrown into the balance against that supreme valuation of the death of Jesus, which, while it is bitterly assailed to-day, forms the very heart of the Pauline Gospel. His positive doctrine is before us when he says that

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 543-544. (E. T.)

'the death of Christ has the value of the covenant-offering and the universal sin-offering, not because of the fact that His enemies put Him to death, but because of the fact that He obediently yielded Himself to this fate as in the providence of God a certain result of His special mission.'[1] Certainly, Christ's willing obedience unto death is of great value for us, but St. Paul saw some profounder meaning in His death when he spoke of Him as 'dying for our sins,' and 'being made a curse for us,' St. Peter when he wrote that 'Christ bare our sins in His body upon the tree,' St. John when he found in Jesus the 'propitiation for the sins of the whole world.' We need not here discuss the doctrine of the Atonement, but this at least must be said,—no doctrine is true to the New Testament presentation which does not teach that, in some way or other, Christ suffered the fate which was our due, that the judgment which God must inflict upon sin fell upon Him instead of upon us, and that He, the personally sinless, entered into such close relations with the sin and guilt of the whole world that St. Paul could say of Him 'Him, who knew no sin, God made to be sin for us.' Whatever crudities may have attached to the proclamation of these doctrines, yet it remains true that the doctrine of Christ's substitution for us in vicarious guilt and vicarious punishment has its place in the New Testament, and must retain its place in the Church if the Gospel is to be preached with full power. The expiatory idea must be kept; ethicised certainly, but not eliminated. Ritschl, however, rejects the substitutionary theory entirely. He maintains that the

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 41. (E. T.)

forensic interpretation of Christ's priestly work conflicts with the Christian's religious interest, that it is unbiblical to represent Christ as solving the problem between God's righteousness and His grace, and that God's righteousness is His consistent action to save the members of the Christian community. He assumes that Christ, in His sufferings, had no sense of guilt, and consequently cannot have regarded them as punishment, though Christ spoke of giving His life as a ransom for many, and of shedding His blood that many might be forgiven, words to which it cannot be said that Ritschl does justice. How we ought to interpret these and other sayings of our Lord is a matter for the deepest thought; but they do at least show, especially if the agony in Gethsemane and the cry of desolation from the Cross are not forgotten, that the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement, the doctrine into whose exposition St. Paul put all his power and all the meaning of his religious experience, cannot be disproved by the assumption that Jesus in His sufferings had no sense of guilt or punishment. Ritschl's own view of the orthodox doctrine is especially unsatisfactory in that he supposes it to imply an amount of suffering by Christ in His death, quantitatively equivalent to the penalty due to sin. We may grant that such language has been used by theologians in the past, but it is in no way necessary to the orthodox position, which can be firmly maintained, though the theory of a mathematical equivalent is rejected as absurd. At the same time Ritschl tries to keep some form of the doctrine of imputation. 'The position of Christ relative to God is imputed to His disciples when God, for Christ's sake, takes them also up into

His effective love.'[1] Elsewhere he says, 'The verdict of justification or forgiveness is therefore not to be formulated in such a way that the community has its relationship to Christ imputed to it, but in such a way that the community which belongs to Christ has imputed to it His position towards the love of God, in which He maintained Himself by His obedience.'[2] But it must be owned that Luther's brilliant and thoroughly Pauline paradox *ego sum tuum peccatum*; *tu es justitia mea* rings truer to the Christian conscience. Herrmann tries to do much more justice to the doctrine of the substitutionary penal sufferings of Jesus. It is natural for the believer, looking back on Christ's work, to say 'He suffers what we should have suffered,' and he will also see that 'while Jesus dispensed forgiveness, He at the same time did everything to establish the inviolable justice of God's moral order.'[3] Dr. Garvie quotes a passage from Kaftan in which he says that 'we regard the death of Christ as the removal of our penalty, as a vicarious suffering of our penalty for us,'[4] while Harnack in his *What is Christianity?* makes a real attempt to preserve for Christianity the truth of expiatory sacrifice. He does not subscribe to particular theories or advance others of his own, but when he asserts that 'no reflection of the "reason," no deliberation of the "intelligence" will ever be able to expunge from the moral ideas of mankind the conviction that injustice and sin deserve to be

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 71. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 547. (E. T.)
[3] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, pp. 135-136. (E. T.)
[4] Quoted in Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 323.

punished, and that everywhere that the just man suffers, an atonement is made which puts us to shame and purifies us,'[1] such a statement shows more of an advance towards the full Christian doctrine than Ritschl ever made.

'Justification or the forgiveness of sins, as the religious expression of that operation of God upon men which is fundamental in Christianity, is the acceptance of sinners into that fellowship with God in which their salvation is to be realised and carried out into eternal life.'[2] Such is Ritschl's first definition of justification or forgiveness, for he identifies the two. In his developed doctrine one remarkable fact emerges in which he has not been followed, even by his own School. He relates justification in the first instance to the Christian community, not to the individual, and argues that the Christian's right relation to Christ is conditioned 'both historically and logically by the fellowship of believers,' historically, because the community is found existing by each individual, and logically because Christ's action upon men can be conceived only 'in accordance with Christ's antecedent purpose to found a community.'[3] Ritschl explicitly distinguishes his view from the Roman Catholic view of the Church, and is justified in so doing, but if we allow that his position finds Scriptural support in passages where St. Paul speaks of the redeemed and purified ecclesia, still it cannot be maintained for a moment that the substitution of the community for the individual believer as the direct object of justifi-

[1] Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 162. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 85. (E. T.)
[3] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 549. (E. T.)

cation, is in accordance with the leading ideas of the New Testament.

We have seen that Ritschl identifies justification with the forgiveness of sins. Further, he identifies these, conceived as effective, 'with reconciliation as expressive of mutual fellowship between God and man.'[1] And since it is God in His character of Father Who justifies, all these ideas may be made identical with adoption. 'The only valid distinction between the two ideas is that forgiveness, or justification, or reconciliation refers generally to the admission of sinners to fellowship with God, in spite of sin, whereas in adoption, the confidential relation to God, which is thereby established, is specially described in terms of the normal relation of children to their father.'[2] But Ritschl also connects most closely the idea of justification with the idea of eternal life, which he refuses to project into the other world. The content of eternal life is, besides the vision of God, lordship over the world, and this is the prerogative of those whose reconciliation with God has enabled them to assume the right attitude towards the world. The result of a long discussion on the teleological relation of justification to eternal life is that 'the combinations, which the Lutheran standards exhibit, of the idea of justification by faith with eternal life on the one hand, and with faith in God's providence on the other, are mutually equivalent, and that the exercise of the latter forms the content of the status of adoption by God, while it is just under the attribute of eternal life that that content must reveal itself at first.'[3]

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 79. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 96. (E. T.)
[3] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 507. (E. T.)

But there is yet one more idea which Ritschl subsumes under the same general definition :—' Regeneration or, as we inaccurately say, the new birth, cannot as a predicate of the individual believer be materially distinguished from effectual justification or reconciliation or adoption.'[1] How this state of regeneration or justification is brought about is for Ritschl one of the mysteries of religion. It is quite possible that Christian theology has subdivided up too much the different stages through which the believer passes, and that Ritschl has done well in showing us the possibility that, under different names, we do but express the same reality : nevertheless, what Dr. Orr calls the ' blurring of all distinct notions ' has real defects. If there has been over-analysis in the theologians of the past it has been through a desire to do justice to what have been felt to be different ideas in Scripture, and there is danger lest in the attempt to reduce these ideas to unity the content of the Christian consciousness should be impoverished.

In dealing with the subjective side of justification, Ritschl devotes much attention to the question how the believer shall gain assurance of his justification. We may pass over his arguments, merely noting his assertion that justification is possible without specific assurance, and come to his conclusions. ' The problem of personal assurance,' he writes, ' is insoluble if it is conceived in a form which represents the subject as passive. Personal assurance can be attained neither through the active ' conflict of penitence ' (*Busskampf*) nor by observation of the moral activity which accompanies it. Personal assurance, springing from justi-

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 600. (E. T.)

fication, is experienced in and through trust in God in all the situations of life, and especially in patience, by him who through his faith in Christ incorporates himself into the community of believers.'[1] On this position of Ritschl's, that the believer has assurance through his superiority by faith to all the situations of life, Dr. Garvie passes a criticism, which appears to the present writer to go very far astray, which is the more surprising in view of the almost invariable excellence of his judgments. However, at times, 'dormitat Homerus,' and this seems to be the case here. The heart of Dr. Garvie's criticism is to be found in his doubt whether Ritschl's conception of assurance as gained through dominion over the world possesses the importance which he gives it, since, for the Christian, 'his relation to God is what most concerns him, and his relation to the world matters very little.'[2] But surely the whole point of Ritschl's argument is that the believer's relation to God is testified to by his superiority to worldly occurrences. Ritschl is entirely at one with Dr. Garvie in maintaining that the Christian's relation to the world matters very little, in the Pauline sense, that he has learned, in whatever state he is, to be content. The Christian's all-important relation to the world is just this—that he has no relation to the world at all. For it can hardly be denied that by lordship over the world Ritschl means complete security of faith, complete superiority to any conceivable event in the world, which might challenge Christian confidence in God.

Protestant theology has always looked upon sancti-

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 191-192. (E. T.)
[2] Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 332.

fication, that is, moral and spiritual holiness, as the direct outcome of justification. Ritschl takes up a decidedly different position. For him, it is eternal life, not sanctification, which is in direct teleological connection with justification. The connection between justification and sanctification, which came to the front in post-Reformation theology, is 'wholly apocryphal,'[1] 'no part of the direct aim of justification is the production of morally good action.'[2] Yet it is impossible for Ritschl to deny that Christianity has an ethical side, and that there must be a connection between the ethical side, expressed in sanctification or good works, and the religious side, expressed in justification or eternal life. So, in order to discover the necessity for morally good action, Ritschl brings in the category of the Kingdom of God, and combines the two pairs of reasons for the necessity of good works given by Evangelical theologians, who contend that the necessity is real 'because God prescribes good works, and they follow from true faith as tokens of the Holy Spirit, and secondly, because men wish to show gratitude for forgiveness, and attain to assurance of salvation.'[3] These pairs of reasons are joined together by Ritschl in his argument that 'the universal ground of all moral conduct towards our fellow-men is that the Christian religion has for its end the Kingdom of God. This association of mankind, of the most comprehensive nature both extensively and intensively, cannot be realised otherwise than through works, concrete action, and speech. These works are good in so far as they

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 496. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 535. (E. T.)
[3] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 489. (E. T.)

are directed towards the universal end which guarantees the usefulness of all the members of the fellowship.'[1] And though Ritschl entirely refuses to regard good works as concomitant causes of eternal life, he does look upon them as manifestations of it, and also, 'according to the law that the exercise of a power serves to strengthen and maintain it, they are organs of eternal life. Thus is proved the truth of St. Bernard's dictum: '*non causa regni, sed via regnandi*.'[2]

In the section devoted to the 'Religious form of moral action,' Ritschl treats of lordship over the world, patience, humility, and faith in providence. Little need be said of these, except to note that he distinguishes patience from apathy, and humility from any outward manifestation of it, and brings into both virtues the conception of active fidelity to vocation. But we must say a little more on the subjects of prayer and Christian perfection, with which also he deals. In prayer he completely subordinates petition to praise and thanksgiving, and argues that it is subordinate in the Lord's Prayer, despite the petitions contained. Ritschl appears, in his treatment of the question, to exaggerate the danger of men praying for unjustifiable blessings; and the necessary combination in prayer of the desire for special help from God and humble submission to God's will, is better expressed by Herrmann, who writes that 'it is fruitless to try and bring about this union by merely saying to a soul that it may indeed ask God for a definite gift, but it must also be always ready to find the gift denied. If we made such an attempt we should either make the prayer heartless,

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 511. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 518. (E. T.)

or we should pretend a resignation that was utter hypocrisy. On the other hand, in the prayer of faith this union follows of itself. . . Our faith sets us before a God Whose help is certain.'[1] In contrast with his treatment of prayer, Ritschl's handling of the subject of Christian perfection is strikingly illuminating, and of real help to piety. Naturally, he rejects the ideal of perfection set up in Greek and Roman Catholicism, in both of which systems it is the monk or hermit who is pre-eminently the holy man, and of all monks the highest type is the contemplative monk. Here Ritschl proves himself entirely in line with the thought of the Reformers. Herrmann quotes numerous passages from Luther in which the great Reformer expresses his contempt for the Roman Catholic idea of flight from the world as especially guaranteeing pure communion with God, while Harnack writes that the Reformation 'protested against the double form of morality, and accordingly against the "higher" form; against the contention that it is particularly well-pleasing to God to make no use of the powers and gifts which are part of creation.'[2] But while it is easy to criticise this view of Christian perfection, it is not so easy to offer a positive, practicable substitute. Ritschl's solution is really valuable. He insists on the possibility of Christian perfection, as otherwise the impulse to moral and religious activity is crippled at the very start. 'It must be asserted, despite the many imperfections we perceive in our religious functions and our moral actions.'[3] But

[1] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, pp. 337-338. (E. T.) [2] Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 284. (E. T.)
[3] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 651. (E. T.)

clearly perfection cannot be interpreted quantitatively. It has a qualitative significance, and there is 'no contradiction between the qualitative sense of Christian perfection, and the fact that we still continue to be conscious of the quantitative imperfection and defectiveness even of those functions in which our Christian faith is expressed.' 'The faith which breaks forth in the prayer "Lord help mine unbelief" is perfect in its own kind.'[1] The essential characteristic of Christian perfection is fidelity to vocation. 'It means that our moral achievement or life-work in connection with the Kingdom of God should, however limited in amount, be conceived as possessing the quality of a whole in its own order.'[2] Hence it is not necessary for men to go outside their vocations to perform extraordinary works, for it is only the omission of morally necessary actions which is wrong. Given this idea of perfection, men will cease to measure themselves and their good works by the universal moral law, which can never possibly be fulfilled in its entirety, and which, if taken as a standard, makes the quest for perfection hopeless. This doctrine of Ritschl's, that a man should try to be faithful to his particular vocation, and make his life a whole in its own order, and that therein lies Christian perfection, is exceedingly valuable, since it banishes the hopeless sense of imperfection, of inability even to approach the goal of effort, which must result if any one compares himself with the universal moral law, and sees perfection in conformity thereto.

The stress which Ritschl lays upon the Kingdom of

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 651, 652. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 665. (E. T.)

God reacts upon his doctrine of the Church, which is given only scanty treatment in his systematic work. 'It is necessary,' he says, 'to distinguish between viewing the followers of Christ, first, under the conception of the Kingdom of God, and secondly, under the conception of the *worshipping community* or the Church. . . . Those who believe in Christ, therefore, constitute a Church in so far as they express in prayer their faith in God the Father, or present themselves to God as men who through Christ are well pleasing to Him. The same believers in Christ constitute the Kingdom of God in so far as, forgetting distinctions of sex, rank, or nationality, they act reciprocally from love, and thus call into existence that fellowship of moral disposition and moral blessings, which extends, through all possible gradations, to the limits of the human race.'[1] In the *Instruction* also he finds in public prayer the characteristic mark of the unity of Christians as the Church, and says that 'in its exercise all Christians are priests.'[2] The best interpretation of the New Testament supports him in his refusal to identify the Church and the Kingdom of God, and in the necessary corollary that membership of the one need not imply membership of the other. But when we remember the exalted doctrine of the Church to be found in certain of St. Paul's epistles, especially in Ephesians and Colossians, we cannot be content with Ritschl's definition of it as merely the worshipping assembly. Ritschl leaves to the Church no ethical functions at all, unless we may speak of the 'necessity of Christians getting to know one another as such in

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 284-285. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *Instruction*, etc., § 81. (E. T.)

the exercises of Divine worship, if they are to make use of occasions to combine together in mutual action from love,'[1] as an ethical duty. To use the term 'holy' of Ritschl's 'Church' would be quite meaningless; still more to speak of it, as St. Paul does, as 'the body of Christ.' We may grant that the expressions, which Dr. Garvie quotes in a note, taken from Ritschl's collected essays, show an advance. Ethical functions of the Church are recognised in teaching and training; mutual service of the members is made an attribute of the Church, and it is spoken of as organised by the gifts of grace and vocations.[2] But these, though welcome additions, remain merely additions to a wholly inadequate conception, and the content of that conception is not appreciably enriched. Herrmann gives a much worthier account of the Church. The Church is the fellowship of believers, to whom alone God can open His inner self. The Church is our mother because of its power of bringing new life into being for its members; 'and since we see that in her alone do we meet with the Creator and the Redeemer, she becomes to us on this earth an element in the Divine act by which we know that, in the midst of this world, we have been set within the Kingdom of God.' The Church is a 'Christ-like, holy people,' but we must not think of her as possessing mysterious, redemptive powers to which we are to submit for our salvation, and the 'significance which the Church has for the Christian as a fellowship of believers, must remain unknown if the false claims of Church officials deprive believers of the priestly dignity, whereby all of them are the organs of

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 290. (E. T.)
[2] Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 422-423.

God for their brethren.'[1] Herrmann has not developed his doctrine of the Church, but development from what he gives us would be possible, whereas, in Ritschl, so much that belongs to the Church is subsumed under the category of the Kingdom of God, that, before a satisfying doctrine of the Church could be constructed from his theology, his whole system would have to be greatly altered.

Of the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, Ritschl says that they are characteristic of the unity of the Christian Church, and assurances of forgiveness. This latter note is true of the Lord's Supper because it has reference to the sacrificial death of Christ, and also of baptism, ' in so far as it has reference to the revelation of the Father through the Son, and through the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the community.'[2] Harnack gives a very similar interpretation of the Sacraments, in accordance with the Reformation view of them. The Reformation desired, he says, ' that they should be regarded either as symbols and marks by which the Christian is known, or as acts deriving their value exclusively from that message of the forgiveness of sins which is bound up with them.'[3] When Ritschl deals particularly with baptism he finds in it ' an act of the community, by which it pledges the individuals uniting with it to the revelation of God to which it owes its existence.'[4] By baptism the individual is received into the sphere of forgiveness, but

[1] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, pp. 190, 191, 194. (E. T.)

[2] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 83. (E. T.)

[3] Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 283. (E. T.)

[4] Ritschl, *Instruction*, etc., § 89. (E. T.)

baptism is constituted a sacrament, by being the act of the community. The baptism of infants Ritschl justifies, since by baptism the child becomes a member of the community, outside of which the formation of the Christian character is impossible. Herrmann opposes the doctrine of a new life received in baptism, inasmuch as there can be no experimental proof of this, and it is of no service to the inner life. Over against the idea of some miraculous change in baptism he sets confidence in Christ's promises and in Christ, and warns against allowing the conception of a miraculous event to supplant Christ. On the other hand, if in baptism is seen the love of God, which is turned towards us in Christ, 'then Christ, and the God revealed to us in Him are really brought to us through baptism.'[1] It is in a religious interpretation of the sacraments that Herrmann finds that which is capable of preventing them from degenerating into magic and being believed in even by the utterly profane.

Ritschl teaches that the Lord's Supper is an act of confession on the part of the community, and also a sacrament having special reference to the sacrificial death of Christ. Its value to the individual is twofold: it associates him with the community in which forgiveness is assured, and on the practical side, quickens the tenderness of moral feeling, and directs the life towards humility, trust, and patience.'[2] With regard to different doctrines concerning the presence of Christ's body and blood, Ritschl denies that the controversy can be settled by an appeal to the words of Christ, or the later explanation of St. Paul: 'especially

[1] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 352. (E. T.)
[2] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 90. (E. T.)

is this true, since none of the confessional doctrines takes the fact into consideration that the broken bread and flowing wine make present the body and blood of Christ under the characteristics of His violent death.'[1] Ritschl, however, does not stand alone in this last view, for Dr. Gore calls attention to and criticises the view of a number of Anglicans 'according to which there is postulated in the Eucharist some real presence of the flesh and blood of Christ as they were when He was dying or dead upon the cross.'[2]

Finally it remains to ask how Ritschl and his disciples conceive of the Last Things. Here they have but little to say, and even if we feel that the New Testament receives scant justice in their treatment, we may be thankful that they have not gone beyond the teaching of Holy Scripture and indulged in useless imaginations and fancies. We saw elsewhere that Ritschl refuses to enter upon speculations as to the nature of the present existence of the exalted Christ, Who, yet, lives and rules. So, with regard to men's future state a similar reserve possesses him. Yet he admits, and, apparently, himself adopts the belief of the Church in 'the practical truths of the Divine judgment, and of the separation of the blessed and the lost, as well as the final attainment of the highest good in the case of the former.' But the hints of the New Testament as to the condition of the blessed and the lost 'lie beyond the possibility of a clear presentation.'[3] He believes in the annihilation of the finally impenitent—if any such there be—who have deliberately chosen evil as their

[1] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 90. (E. T.)
[2] Gore, *The Body of Christ*, p. 181.
[3] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 77. (E. T.)

good and set themselves against redemption and the final end of the Kingdom of God. They alone are subject to the wrath of God, a view for which Ritschl claims the support of the New Testament. The Christian hope, on the other hand, is set on 'the survival of the spiritual life in an appropriate body.'[1] Herrmann looks forward to the sight of the personal life of Jesus 'with other eyes than we see with to day.' 'The prospect that some time we shall experience His power in unrestrained and immediate personal communion with Him will release us from our bondage to all earthly troubles and pleasures. It makes no difference in this respect, whether the Christian expects the second coming of the Lord as the primitive Christian brotherhood expected it, or whether his hope is, as ours must be, the prospect of being taken up to Him.'[2] Kaftan's eschatology is contained in twelve pages of his *Dogmatik*, which Professor W. P. Paterson reviewed, and whose words Dr. Garvie quotes. Kaftan believes in a catastrophe before the goal—namely, eternal life in God's Kingdom—is reached. The catastrophe will involve, here the destruction of the outer world, there the destruction of the outward man. Eternal life is assured to all members of His body, but Kaftan recognises the presence of eternal death also over against eternal life.[3] It may be said that Ritschlianism gives the scantiest room to the problems of eschatology, and is too confident in its belief that annihilation will be the fate of the impenitent;

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 609. (E. T.)

[2] Herrmann, *Communion of the Christian with God*, pp. 293-294. (E. T.)

[3] See Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 364.

but in this, more than in any other sphere of Christian theology, it is better to say too little than too much. The veil spread between the life beyond the grave and our life here is raised but a little in the New Testament. The Ritschlian theologians can hardly be blamed if, while they firmly believe in the fact of personal eternal life, and admit the possibility of irremediable sin and its consequent destruction, they neither speculate vainly on the nature of the former, nor find it necessary to enlarge on the state of the lost and to draw out the significance of their final doom.

CHAPTER X

APPRECIATION AND CRITICISM

In the preceding chapters we have attempted to give an exposition of the main features and conclusions of the Ritschlian theology ; incidentally, we have tried to appraise at their proper value the various propositions and contentions of this theology, as they have appeared before us ; but in this final chapter a more connected view of Ritschlianism must be essayed, and its intrinsic worth, whether great or small, set forth. The Ritschlian theologians are certainly men with a message, in which they believe intensely, and in which they see the advent of much needed assistance for the Christian Church to-day. This message has been fiercely assailed by the orthodox as but little better than a false evangel, by the liberals as an impossible compromise between the ancient dogmatic and modern thought, which, while it refuses to acknowledge any debt to liberalising theology, yet, in so far as it has any value at all, is a half-hearted move in the direction of that radical reconstruction of Christianity demanded and carried out by thinkers of the liberal school. Between the Ritschlians and their critics we must judge as fairly as possible.

The present writer hopes that his exposition of the

Ritschlian theology will have confirmed his argument in the introductory chapter, that, if Ritschlianism is to be understood aright, it must never be divorced from its context and environment. Ritschlianism does not claim to be a new theology; what it does claim to do is to present a view of Christian theology and its problems, in which the definitely Protestant positions of the Reformers are drawn out to their necessary results, instead of being hampered by the presence of an ill-according mass of material taken over, without due consideration, from the old Catholicism. Unless we are pledged to complete antipathy to the Reformation, we must sympathise with this effort as meeting a very obvious need. It is important to be able to distinguish between the primary and the secondary, the essential and the accidental in the thought of the Reformers. These great men were the authors of true and transforming ideas, neglected, if not wholly lost, in the mediæval Church; but it was not to be expected that the doctrinal system which they constructed would be able to maintain itself in anything approaching to integrity. A purposeful anti-Roman polemic was far too prominent, and whereas the old dogmatic had been the work of centuries of slow progress towards a completed edifice, the systematic theology of Protestantism had to be constructed in an exceedingly brief space of time, in order to present the appearance of a finished whole, and to be able to make as fair an outward show as the imposing and unified system of Rome. The doctrinal disruption which, from an early date, marked continental Protestantism, and the failure to withstand in any effective manner the later assaults of rationalism,

proved that the gigantic work of the Reformers held in itself the seeds of its own decay. Ritschl and his followers were fully conscious of the Reformers' failure ; but they wished to show that all that was most vital in the ideas of the Reformation was in no way involved in this failure, and that the chaos into which doctrinal Protestantism had fallen was the result of these ideas never having been allowed free play. The Reformation Settlement in England was very different from the continental revolution, so that the attacks made upon the constructive work, both theological and ecclesiastical, of Luther or Melanchthon or Calvin, and the various defences of that work, only concern us indirectly. But if the Church of England is, as Archbishop Benson declared, Reformed and Protestant as well as Apostolic and Catholic, those who belong to her communion cannot be uninterested in the entirely praiseworthy effort of the Ritschlians to find out by careful analysis which part of the Reformers' work is of permanent, regulative value, and which part, on the other hand, must give way before truer methods of working and deeper insight into the nature of the questions at issue.[1]

A constant charge preferred against the Reformers by the Ritschlians is that though they regained the true conception of faith, and inaugurated a truer, because more experimental, view of Christian dogmas, they did not break effectively with the philosophical intellectualism of Catholicism, with the result that an intellectualistic view of Christian doctrine triumphed

[1] The great Nonconformist bodies also are vitally interested in the same question, the more so because, unlike the Church of England, they cannot fall back upon credal or episcopal authorities.

once again in the orthodox Protestant theology of the seventeenth century, and led to a new form of scholasticism which perpetuated all the faults, without possessing any of the inherent dignity, of Catholic scholasticism. Scholasticism aims at complete unity, at the satisfactory exposition of the fact that truth is one and harmonious, and that theology, the Queen of sciences, is served by all other sciences which contribute their share, in their own several orders, to the establishment of the truths which she asserts. The Ritschlians, on the contrary, are opposed to every kind of scholasticism and intellectualism; they make a separation between the domains of nature and spirit; they are not eager to see in science and philosophy either the servants or the masters of theology, and they make use of the method known as 'value-judging,' which is anything but an intellectualistic way of arriving at truth. In this attitude of theirs the Ritschlians are very naturally compared with the Modernists and Pragmatists of the day, and are looked upon as illustrating the very widespread feeling that the powers of the intellect have been unduly exalted, even in the sphere of the investigation of truth, formerly considered peculiarly its own. There is, of course, a connection between the Ritschlians, the Modernists and the Pragmatists. They agree in revolting from the excessive intellectualism of Hegel, and his comparative neglect of the category of will; they agree also in insisting that truth must not be represented as simply lying ready to hand for the seeker, but as sought and found in the effect it produces upon the seeker, so that, in some sense, he may be said to impose his will upon reality, and 'make' truth. But there are also very

wide differences: for the Pragmatists the problems of truth, and of the mutual relations of feeling, will, and intellect in man, are primarily philosophical problems. The Modernists, sceptical of some of the most important of the Gospel facts, and unable to accept the orthodox Catholic presentations of Christian doctrine, are anxious to preserve dogma as a symbol, transient indeed, and yet essential for Christian piety. But the Ritschlians, looking askance at the development of doctrine in the Church, which the Modernists, in principle at least, justify, are influenced in their anti-intellectualism solely by a desire to return to the pure, primitive Gospel, and to appreciate its power by its influence over men, not by the fact that it expresses itself in beautiful symbolic truths. The Ritschlians and Modernists are at one in seeing in the orthodox dogma the effect of the Platonic and Neo-platonic philosophies operating upon Christian soil; but whereas the Modernists tend to find true religion in mysticism, in the immediate communion of the soul with God, which is superior to all facts and doctrines, though this judgment should be qualified as far as the teaching of the late Father Tyrrel, at least, is concerned, Ritschl and his disciples strenuously oppose mysticism as inextricably bound up with Neo-platonic metaphysics, and as tending to hide the historic Person and work of Christ from His disciples. The Ritschlian protest against intellectualism is dictated by its strenuous grasp of the Gospel as an historic fact, and not a principle or idea, while in Roman Catholic Modernism history is pushed into the background, and the evangelical records are subordinated in value to the doctrinal development within the Church. Ritschl

and his followers, in their treatment of the question of the place of the intellect, have reacted much too far in their dislike of the bloodless categories of the Hegelian dialectic, but we must not ascribe to them that seeming divorce of Truths of faith from Truths of fact which characterises much of Modernism. Ritschlianism has a much truer hold of the Gospel than has Modernism, and its anti-intellectual tendencies are moved by a genuine desire to preserve in its full purity and integrity the Gospel as preached by Jesus, and taught in the primitive community. And it cannot be denied that the intellectualism of the early Greek Fathers, however many admirable features it possessed, did threaten to resolve the Gospel into a complex unity of a number of transcendental ideas. The Ritschlians have not adequately apprehended the fact that truth must ultimately be one, but in their separation of religious truth from scientific truth they are not really dualistic. It is a work of great value to show that the validity of the ideas of religion and Christianity does not depend on the ratification of those ideas by science and philosophy. If there were among us a greater confidence in the ability of religion to maintain its own positions by its own powers, there would be fewer of the painful and sometimes disingenuous attempts to show that science and philosophy do, after all, echo the conclusions of theology. No Ritschlian has pretended that an idea can be true in one sphere and false in another; what the members of the School have asserted is that we must not go to science or philosophy, and expect them to support a religious and Christian world-view; a religious world-view can be reached only in the sphere of positive, historic religion, and

be proved in no other way than by those methods of verification which religion has at its disposal.

Let us now go on to consider Ritschlianism in relation to Christian apologetic, to Christian piety, and to Christian systematic theology.

We have seen that Ritschlianism, despite the distinctions which it draws between the religious and other spheres, cannot justly be accused of teaching that there is a *doppelte Wahrheit* ('double truth'). And we cannot but appreciate the spirit which leads the theologians of this School to defend the authority and autonomy of religion within her own sphere. Such considerations might lead us to imagine that Ritschlianism has constructed an apologetic likely to be extremely effective. But, in reality, its characteristic defects tell heavily against its success. The age is, indeed, quite ready to listen to theology in its own self-justification, and does not, like the middle of the nineteenth century, desire to impose upon theology the tyrannous authority of natural science. But the age, in so far as it is religious at all, is anxious to see God everywhere, and we must allow that Ritschlianism gives up whole tracts of thought to complete agnosticism with regard to the things of God. Without prejudging any question, we may legitimately see whether natural science bears witness at all to an Almighty Creator; without affirming the logical success of the speculative, metaphysical arguments for the existence of God, we may probe the recesses of the human mind and consciousness to find there, if possible, testimony to a transcendental and yet personal Being. Moreover, the ordinary man, who is not a theologian, but is very likely a worker in some other field of knowledge, cannot

be prevented from a consideration of whether, and if so, how, the results he arrives at stand in relation to the whole interpretation of the world. Now Ritschl did come to admit, in the third edition of *Justification and Reconciliation*, that philosophy must frame a world-view, but he consistently assumed the worthlessness of any results of philosophical inquiry which touched the theological field. The practical effect of this isolation of the religious and theological by Ritschl is to make an unity of knowledge impossible, and to check the natural impulse to form a synthesis of the facts established in different departments of thought. This secularisation of a large area of knowledge is neither desirable in itself, nor in accordance with the unifying tendency so prevalent to-day. Ritschl and Herrmann have done well in claiming for religion its own sphere, and in protesting against external control; they have not let themselves be frightened from the ascription of personality to God by the intellectualism of Hegel, nor have they surrendered a belief in the miraculous to any scientific doctrine of the irrefragibility of the natural order; but in their zeal lest religion should be dominated by considerations and opinions drawn from other quarters they have restricted the rights of religion and withheld her from looking everywhere for some trace of the truths to which she bears witness. Natural religion is neither as impossible nor as useless as the Ritschlians would have us believe. Far more importance must be attached to St. Paul's statement that God has never left Himself without witness than the School does in practice allow. We cannot, as Christians, take up the position that the knowledge of God among men, apart from the revela-

tion of God in Christ, is no concern of ours. Like many other thinkers, Ritschl is so much in love with his own method that he almost appears to think that truth can have no value, unless it be arrived at in the right way. Yet, surely, just as St. Paul gave thanks that, from whatever motives, Christ was preached, so we ought to rejoice that men have come to some knowledge of the truth, however inadequate that knowledge be, however imperfect their instruments of research. For the Ritschlian insistence on the pre-eminence and finality of Christianity we can only have praise : it is necessary to assert strongly that Christianity is not just one religion among many, with its merits and defects like the rest, but the authoritative message of God to man. It is equally necessary to decline the shallow doctrine which finds in all religions a common element of truth, and rejects everything that is peculiar to any religion as a mere theological curiosity. Not in this way shall we arrive at the truth. But the complete separation which Ritschl makes between the Christian religion and other religions is neither wise, apologetically considered, nor true to fact. And its neglect of other religions, far from being an assistance to apologetic, is a forbidding obstacle to the temper of our time. Half-truths and broken lights have no attraction for the School, but for the ordinary man struggling and confused by the clash of philosophies and religions, half-truths and broken lights are often all that he can attain to. Ritschlianism presents no sufficient apologetic, because it can make no cogent appeal to the unbeliever. It is impossible not to feel, in reading the theologians of the School, that they are speaking as Christians to Christians. Even Herrmann,

who deals very tenderly with minds beset by intellectual difficulties, cannot be reckoned as a great apologist. All that he says on the self-evidencing fact of the Person of Christ, and the redemption that fact brings, is most Christian and heart-stirring ; but we are faced to-day with just this problem that there are multitudes of persons to whom Christ does not appeal in this way. Mr. H. G. Wells's book, *First and Last Things*, shows us the picture of a candid and reverent thinker, who yet says quite simply that the thought of Christ has for him no value at all to his salvation. Certainly Christ does impress many in exactly the way which Herrmann points out, but what is unfortunate in Herrmann's position is that he has practically nothing to say to the man who does not feel and answer to that impression. One of the very greatest of all our difficulties is the presence of men and women, good, clever and inquiring, for whom Christianity has no attraction at all, and this difficulty is ours as much as the Ritschlians'. But there can be no question that Ritschlianism has fewer appeals to make to men of other religions and to the natural man than Christianity really possesses. Herrmann, in his intense ethical sense, seems rather to forget that Christianity appeals to man's intellect as well as to man's conscience and moral need. Herrmann does allow that the proofs of the Resurrection of Christ are capable of appealing even to unbelievers, but he might lay much more stress on the fact. It is, of course, important to understand all that the Resurrection implies, to look upon it in closest connection with the supreme value of our Lord's Person, but, from the purely apologetic standpoint, the all-important consideration is that the Gospels inform us

of Christ's Resurrection as of a fact of history, and that it is exceedingly difficult to frame any explanation of the final narratives of the Gospel history that is as easy to accept as the traditional doctrine. Let us insist on the centrality of the moral in man, and of the intimacy of the relation of Christianity thereto, but, after all, moral needs are not the only needs, and to the anxious seeker after truth we must supply some more convincing statement of the reasonableness of Christianity than is set forth in the Ritschlian theology.[1] We have not forgotten that Kaftan does try to prove the truth of Christianity, but, valuable though some of his ideas may be, they are much more likely to appeal to the already converted, than to have any considerable success in bringing home to the minds of men outside the Christian Church the conviction that Christianity is true. The duty of Christian Apologetic is twofold—to show that the facts with which the origin of Christianity is bound up are true facts and not inventions; and secondly, to demonstrate the inherent reasonableness of the Christian religion, and its relation to the presentations of reasons from other quarters. The Ritschlians have not carried out these tasks, though, perhaps, an exception should be made in the case of Harnack, who is at once sympathetic in his attitude towards other religions, and keenly interested in the evangelistic mission of the Church.

[1] The present writer would not like to appear to undervalue the importance for apologetical theology of due insistence being laid upon the moral consciousness. Herrmann's return to Kant's doctrine of the categorical imperative is altogether praiseworthy. But even the moral problem is not the same for all, and some may be better led in other ways to acknowledge the truth of Christianity. Cf. p. 105.

We need not blame them for this, for they have been engaged in a great deal of necessary criticism of the Christianity of the past and the present, but Ritschl, who is essentially the systematic theologian of the School, has not, in his work of construction, faced the necessity of supplying an apologetic capable of making an adequate defence of his re-statement of Christian theology. For we cannot allow that his denial of the rights of philosophy and non-religious thought to criticise Christianity is at all a possible apologetic. Christianity will continue to be criticised from the standpoints of natural science, metaphysics, and comparative religion, and those attacks have to be met. Christianity cannot choose her own ground for the battle; the fight must be on ground chosen by her opponents, unless the victory is to go by default. Our conclusion must be that though the Ritschlians have contributed ideas capable of rendering good service to Christianity, these ideas are insufficient in themselves to constitute an apologetic.[1]

The School has been more successful in its treatment of Christian piety and the Christian life. There is always a danger of Christian piety degenerating into sentimentalism, and it is a danger which besets 'Catholics' and 'Evangelicals' equally. The degeneration is marked by that attachment to our Lord's human characteristics which Dr. Hort described as 'Jesusolatry.' It is seen in Roman Catholic devotions like the devotion to the Sacred Heart; it is seen also among Evangelicals in familiarity of speech and prayer to 'Jesus.' The result is the professionally pious or religious individual, a well-known and quite intoler-

[1] See Note G.

able type. These forms of religiousness were closely studied by the Ritschlians, who opposed them by restoring the New Testament conception of faith, and giving it the supremacy over love, laying stress on the unity and redeeming might of the Person of Jesus Christ, and teaching that religion is concerned with the performance of duties in the world and not with states of feeling. Ritschlianism encourages a manly piety greatly needed in days when religion is so often thought of as something pleasantly soothing to the feelings, when people—to borrow a colloquial phrase of Dr. Forsyth's—live upon religious tea. We need to try to find out what Christian piety specifically is, and for this purpose it is necessary to keep very close to the teaching of the New Testament. That we gain strength from God for the performance of our moral duties, so that in them He is near us and we have communion with Him, is a valuable thought.

The Ritschlians are right also in their view that Christian mysticism may very easily become a mysticism which is not Christian. Nevertheless, we cannot claim adequacy for the Ritschlian treatment of the question. Feelings are, indeed, of little importance compared with the ability, through God's help, to do what is right and difficult, and Christian faith has in itself the joy of assurance. Yet there is a desire, uncondemnable, natural, Christian, to speak to God as a man speaks to a friend, and Ritschlianism has not given it its due. And though the claim to have direct communion with the exalted Christ may lead to pretences of immediate unjustifiable revelation, we cannot deny that the will of Christ may be revealed to

the believer who humbly prays for guidance. We saw in the chapter on ' The Ritschlian conception of man's communion with God ' that the School does not wish to deny the fact of religious experience, but its positive doctrine is neither clear nor satisfactory. While it is true that the exalted Christ lives and reigns in a sphere of which we can form no conception, it is not necessary to speak of Him as hidden. We cannot help feeling that an application of the principle of value-judging to this sphere would have led to truer results. It is not the personal piety of the Ritschlian theologians which is in question ; the largeness and force of faith which characterises them is remarkable in an age not noted for intensity of faith. But the apparent denial, however carefully explained, of direct communion of the soul with God, is likely to influence for their harm those who think that it is just in this direct intercourse that the testimony of Christian experience is most sure, and who cannot otherwise rise to the heights of faith on which the Ritschlians so freely and joyfully live.

We pass on to an attempt to appraise the value of the work done and the ideas presented by the Ritschlian theologians in connection with systematic theology. It is time that we began to inquire carefully how Christian doctrine stands in view of all the work done upon the ultimate authority for all systematised doctrine, the Bible, during the past century. Dr. Sanday has given it as his opinion that we have reached the end of a period of investigation, and must try to estimate its results. Ritschl's systematic theology was very little dependent upon critical results, while he is certainly untrustworthy on points of

Biblical exegesis, but his careful inquiry into the relation of established doctrine to the Holy Scripture deserves imitation. Moreover, he understood the importance of method, an importance often but poorly grasped in England. It is true that his method may not commend itself to us. He views Christian doctrine from the point of view of the two foci—Justification by Faith, and the Kingdom of God. Now, important as the former doctrine is, it is not possible for any one to use it in quite the same way as Ritschl, unless he feels himself, equally with Ritschl, in the closest relation to Luther and the German Reformation. The conception of the Kingdom of God has had great attention paid to it lately, and is an inspiring ideal for all who wish to bind men together in a vast commonwealth aiming at the realisation of good in the world, but its value as a regulative idea for Christian theology has been overestimated in the Ritschlian School. But the mere attempt to find a regulative idea is of great importance, and enables theology to maintain itself as an unity, which is quite missed when Christian doctrine is presented as a number of ideas loosely connected. Ritschl treated theology as a science and was right in so treating it.

Two principles, which are not primarily theological, have influenced Ritschl's constructive labours. The first is his peculiar epistemology, from which springs his refusal to go beyond phenomena to a consideration of the 'thing at rest'; the second is the principle of value-judging, which enables him to find in phenomena all the reality which is necessary to guard against subjective idealism. The two principles do not cohere well together; it is not merely the case that the influence

of the former is negative, of the latter positive : it is also true that if the predications which result from value-judging are to be taken seriously, if Ritschl's argument in his *Theologie und Metaphysik* that a subject is known in its predicates is brought to its logical conclusion, then Ritschl's agnosticism with regard to the ' thing at rest ' behind phenomena must go. To value-judging no such objection can be taken as is legitimately taken to this defective epistemology which, while genuinely undertaken to keep out metaphysics, with difficulty saves itself from slipping into a negation of those theological conclusions into which an element of metaphysics must enter. The present writer cannot agree with the usual objections brought against the Ritschlian value-judgments, and he is certain that a good deal too much has been made of them. It is true that there is an incompleteness about Ritschl's use of the principle, which comes out very clearly in his interpretation of the Godhead of Christ ; but if it is remembered that a value-judgment is not a judgment arbitrarily formed in detachment from given facts, and is not necessarily opposed to a judgment of existence, the attacks of Ritschl's opponents lose their force.

Coming to particular dogmatic positions of the School we must mention with praise the emphasis laid on the Personality of God. Not only is this doctrine vital to Christianity, but true religion and a religious view of ethics is bound up with it. Once let God be resolved into the all-comprehending world-force, and free-will, and the possibility of sin, become unthinkable, while immortality, conceived of as the continuance of personal identity and consciousness in the next world,

is endangered. It is regrettable that Ritschl, whose note rings so true in this respect, and whose doctrine of God as loving, personal Will grants all that a Christian need ask, goes on, under the influence of his conception of the Kingdom of God, to impoverish the content of the idea of God, and, with all his insistence on active functioning, to make of God's will something very much like an immovable substance, unalterably set in a particular direction.

But the success of the Ritschlians in framing a systematic theology will be largely, and rightly, judged by the success or failure of their Christology. Now first of all, even supposing that the Ritschlian theology were, constructively, Unitarian, the Ritschlian theologians are not Unitarian at heart. The desire to preserve the title of Godhead for Christ is not due to a mere sentimental attachment to the ideas of the past: there is very little sentimentalism of this kind in the School. But Ritschl and his followers felt that Godhead was truly predicable of Christ, and that no proper conception of Christ could be formed if Godhead was not ascribed to Him. But they also felt strongly the complete failure of the doctrine of the Two Natures to present any convincing picture of Christ as God, and besides this feeling, which is shared by many perfectly orthodox thinkers, they were unduly influenced in their general treatment of the problem by their opinion that the Church doctrine of Christ's Deity was formulated under the influence of Greek metaphysics. Ritschl himself was further handicapped by his uncompromising rejection of the category of substance, without which no satisfactory doctrine of the Godhead of Christ can be framed. Many of the objections which

Ritschl raises against the 'Two Natures' formula seem to the present writer unanswerable; surely the time has come for saying quite openly that the Chalcedonian definition is not infallible, and that the picture of our Lord in the Gospels is very different from the picture given of Him in such a work as the *Tome* of Leo, in which the various activities of Christ are divided between the divine and human natures, so that it is possible to say that as man He wept by the grave of Lazarus, but as God raised him from the dead. We cannot hope to solve the mystery of the Lord's Person, but we can feel that such a treatment of it as the above is wholly unsatisfying. Not even the doctrine of the 'communicatio idiomatum' can get over the difficulty presented by the presence side by side in one Person of two natures. It is far better to say with Herrmann that in everything which Jesus did we see God acting, provided that, along with this phrase, we assert with Kaftan that Jesus had His origin from above, not from among men. And if we appreciate all that is implicit in the idea, we can derive great assistance from the doctrine of the entire harmony of Christ's will with the will of God, His Father. But it is a mistake to oppose, as Ritschl does oppose, ethical unity to metaphysical unity. If the subject is known by its predicates, and nature is manifest in will, as Ritschl is ready to admit, then the fact that there was no difference between the will of Christ and the will of God, points to an unity of nature. One of the best tests of any Christology is whether it does or does not represent Christ as a Divine Being, Who has descended into the world. Such a doctrine need not, and indeed should not, be the beginning of a Christology,

but any Christology which does not attain to it is so seriously at issue with the New Testament that any other merits it may possess must be weighed down by this one omission. On this point it is necessary to assume an attitude of entire ignorance with regard to Ritschl's meaning. We can only believe—extraordinary as such a position must appear to us—that he considered the question of a real, personal pre-existence of Christ to be unimportant. Of Ritschl's most important disciples Herrmann and Kaftan incline to a positive position on the question of pre-existence, Harnack distinctly to a negative one.

We may grant that the Ritschlians' attack on the doctrine formulated at Chalcedon is legitimate and powerful, but yet it will be said, and said justly, that though the faith of the Church has been expressed by means of a particular formula, the doctrine of Christ's substantial Godhead does not stand or fall with its formulation in the Chalcedonian statement. Belief in His full Godhead was firmly held in the Church centuries before Chalcedon. And what makes even sympathetic persons uneasy about the Ritschlians' theology is the suspicion that it is not merely the Two Natures formula, but also the truth which that formula is intended to represent, which is given up by the School. Christ may be given a position far above that of any divine hero ; His pre-existence, and still more clearly His heavenly reign, may be allowed ; but the Christian Church's consciousness of all that her Lord must be, if He is really all that she has found Him, looks for a clear statement of Christ's essential Godhead. A pre-existent being, become incarnate in the world, may be less than God : he may be an Arian divinity ;

it is not in this sense that the Church can bear witness to the Godhead of the Lord. And so the question is still asked—Does the Ritschlian School hold to Christ's essential Godhead ? Does not its silence imply denial ?

The present writer feels keenly that such questions must be asked, and are very natural, and he hopes he has said enough to show that he does not in the least think the Ritschlian Christology adequate. But, at the same time, he cannot agree with those critics who would represent the Ritschlian School as definitely declaring against Christ's substantial Godhead. Ritschl has certainly attempted to do the impossible—to construct a doctrine of Christ's Godhead without using the category of substance, but even if *we* feel that the neglect of this category amounts logically to a denial of Christ's substantial Deity, we ought not to impute this to the Ritschlians. To speak of Ritschl, Herrmann, and Kaftan as Unitarians is a real abuse of language.

Ritschl's doctrine of the Atonement is more genuinely Socinian than his doctrine of Christ's Deity. It is a curious fact that there are many thinkers who would pride themselves on their orthodoxy and attachment to Catholic principles, and shrink with horror from Socinianism where it touches the doctrine of the Incarnation, who yet view with favour an application of thoroughly Socinian and rationalistic principles to the doctrine of the Atonement. But it was the Atonement and not the Incarnation which Socinianism first assailed. This attitude, so surprising in convinced Christians, is due to the belief that the Incarnation stands by itself and that the Atonement is a mere

corollary from it; whereas the true Christian method, and unquestionably the method of the New Testament, is to place the Cross in the forefront, and pass on from that to an assertion of the Divinity of Him Who suffered on Cavalry. It cannot be said too often that the Cross, not the manger, Calvary, nor Bethlehem, is the heart of the New Tetsament. In England the influence of Dr. Westcott from Cambridge and of the Anglo-Catholic successors of the Tractarians from Oxford combined has tended in the opposite direction. In the writer's judgment it is a perilous course to throw the doctrine of propitiatory Atonement to the wolves of Rationalism, while yet retaining the belief that the Incarnation can be preserved in its integrity: and it is a course against which the New Testament, as he reads it, stands opposed. We are indeed told that it is the fact of the Atonement which matters and not theories about it, but if the saying that 'Christ died for our sins' is not to be simply a shibboleth, it is impossible to refrain from asking what such an idea implies. In all effective preaching this truth that 'Christ died for our sins' has been anything but an idea without positive content; and wherever the Christian Gospel has been most effective the content of that idea has been the substitution of Christ for us in His sufferings and death. Undoubtedly crudities, and worse, immoralities, have clustered round this doctrine of substitution; it has been presented in a way quite incompatible with Trinitarianism or the conception of the Fatherhood of God; but these crudities and immoralities are not inherent in the doctrine. Ritschl's own intense objection to the expiatory idea is not easy to understand, especially in view of the much more

sympathetic treatment of the idea by his most prominent disciples. But his inadequate doctrine of sin manifestly had a share in the development of his thought on this subject. It is impossible not to think of Ritschl as one of those who, to quote once more the words of Dr. Forsyth, 'reared in the sacred and pious atmosphere of the German manse, have never known the drama, the fury, the pang, the tragedy, the crisis of the actual world at large with its horrible guilt and its terror of judgment.'[1] It is to be hoped that those who still look to Ritschl as their teacher will develop rather along the lines of Herrmann's moral realism, and arrive at a deeper doctrine of sin and atonement than that which Ritschl constructed.

It is probable that theologians who belong to the Church of England will feel keenly the absence of anything like a satisfying account of the Church and the Sacraments in the Ritschlian School. We saw that Ritschl's doctrine of the Church is greatly affected by his transference of many of the attributes, usually supposed to belong to the Church, to the Kingdom of God. But the entire School shares this defect, even though some members attempt something more adequate. While allowing that on this point the omissions of Ritschlianism are obvious and serious, it may still be possible to find something of value for Christians who hold far more positive beliefs. If Ritschlianism has underrated the importance of the Church and sacraments, there is a great tendency elsewhere to exaggerate it. The sacraments are regarded as almost exclusive means to eternal life, and faith is

[1] Forsyth, 'The Distinctive Thing in Christian Experience,' *Hibbert Journal*, April 1908.

quite subordinated to them. We need not now inquire into the exact place which sacraments fill in the New Testament, but it can hardly be contended that, as means to salvation, they are reckoned of more importance than the simple faith which believes in God and His Son Jesus Christ, and knows that in this belief it has everlasting life. The Ritschlian insistence on faith is a valuable antidote to undue stress laid upon the sacraments. And with regard to the Church, we must recollect that, though Ritschl's teaching is inadequate, he does lay stress on the Christian community—sometimes too great stress, as when he makes the community the direct object of justification. There are many who have come to confuse the doctrine of the Church with an interpretation of the Church's character as necessarily sacerdotal. In what sense a sacerdotal character may be ascribed to the Church is a question which we may leave on one side, but we must not think of the Ritschlian theologians as committed to sheer individualism, simply because they reject sacerdotalism.

Here we may end. It may be thought that the present writer has dealt too tenderly with Ritschlianism, and where its meaning is obscure, has been too much inclined to give it the benefit of the doubt. But, just as the Ritschlians prefer to deal with the active phenomenon rather than with the 'thing at rest,' so he feels that a School which is alive to the needs of the time, and, with whatever failures, tries to supply them, should be looked upon with friendliness by all who realise the same need, and would gladly do something to meet it. No one can pretend that the Ritschlian solution of the problems of theology is other than

very imperfect ; but towards all whose aim it is to make more manifest the grace and truth which came into the world with Jesus Christ, our hearts may go out with the sympathy of those who, with them, are disciples and servants of the One Master.

NOTES

A., page 6.

Reference must be made to Dr. Denney's latest work, *Jesus and the Gospel*. The interest of the book for the student of Ritschlianism—apart from its great intrinsic value—lies in a style of thought and expression which bears close resemblance to much that lies at the root of Ritschlianism. This is the more remarkable when we remember that Dr. Denney has in the past been a stern, we should say unduly stern, critic of Ritschl's theology. A few references to *Jesus and the Gospel* will show how much sympathy there is between Dr. Denney in his positive thought and the best thought of the Ritschlian theologians. Thus on p. ix. he writes: 'It would fulfil the deepest desire of the writer if what he has said of the self-revelation of Jesus prevailed with any one who has regarded it as an unreal question to take it up in earnest, and to let the Christ Who is historically attested in the Gospels freely appeal to his mind, not as an illustration of some philosophical theorem of his own about God or Man, but as the Sovereign Person that He was and is.' The likeness of this passage to so much that Herrmann has written of the convincing power over mind and will exerted by the figure of Jesus as we meet Him in the gospel-history is obvious. Of the Apostles, Dr. Denney writes (p. 12), 'To all believers, Jesus belonged to the divine as truly as to the human sphere. In the practical sense of believing in Him they all confessed His Godhead.' This is almost an epitome of Herrmann's expressed opinion of the Deity of Jesus, seen most clearly in his *Communion of the Christian with God*. On p. 29 Dr. Denney uses with clear approval the phrase 'religious value,' for which the Ritschlians have been so fiercely attacked. Speaking of St. Paul's attitude to Jesus, he says, 'It is not putting it too strongly to say that He had for Paul the religious value of God.' It is incredible that Dr. Denney should have used this expression in writing of what St. Paul found in Jesus, if he felt that the idea of 'religious value,' or 'value-judgment,' necessarily implied that the fact, objectively considered, was different from, even the reverse of, its value. Again

in view of the Ritschlian distrust of every attempt to reach God, whether through nature or philosophy, which is divorced from God's historic self-revelation in Christ, a distrust for which they have often been blamed, it is interesting to find that Dr. Denney (p. 38), approving of what he calls 'the truly evangelical remark of Dr. Chalmers—'I find that without a hold of Christ there is no hold of God at all.' And it might be Herrmann himself speaking when we read (p. 394): 'Faith-producing things are not dogmatic definitions of His person: they are not doctrinal propositions, such as those of the Nicene Creed; nor are they less formal expressions of essentially the same character. They are such things as we have been in contact with all through our study of the gospels: they are the life, the mind, the death, the resurrection of Jesus. If the exhibition of these does not evoke the Christian attitude of the soul to Him, the soundest metaphysical doctrine of His person is worthless.' Finally, the somewhat unsympathetic position of Dr. Denney in criticising the attempts of the Fathers to reach a formal, settled Christology is greatly reminiscent of the theologians of the Ritschlian School. To say, as Dr. Denney does (p. 403), 'the Athanasian answer' (*i.e.* to the problem of Christ's person) 'explains nothing' is hardly just, especially in view of the historical circumstances, but we should not have been in the least surprised if we met with such a remark in the writings of Ritschl or one of his disciples. It would be an exaggeration to speak of the whole atmosphere of Dr. Denney's book as Ritschlian, but, unquestionably, there are many striking affinities.

B., page 12.

Harnack's Ritschlian sympathies are seen perhaps most clearly in his treatment of Luther's place in the development of dogma in his *History of Dogma*, a treatment comparable to Herrmann's *Communion of the Christian with God*, which also is an interpretation of Luther. The quotation from Luther which stands at the beginning of the seventh volume of the English translation of Harnack's great work, exactly expresses the Ritschlian position, and is akin to the passage in Melanchthon, quoted later on in this essay. 'The Sophists,' writes Luther, 'have depicted how Christ is Man and God, count His arms and legs, mingle together in wonderful fashion His two natures. But this is only a sophistical knowledge of the Lord Christ. For Christ is not called Christ because He has two natures. What have I to do with that? But He bears this lordly and comforting name from the office and work He has taken to Himself; it is that which gives Him His name. That He is by nature Man and God, He has said for Himself; but it is by the exercise of His office therein, by the outpouring

of His love, and His becoming my Saviour and Redeemer that I gain comfort and good.'

C., page 52.

It is natural to try and see whether any English theologian of the middle of the nineteenth century, when such important changes were passing over the study of theology, at all resembles Ritschl. It must be admitted that English theology pursued a course so different from theology in Germany that no close resemblance can be expected. Yet the name of F. W. Robertson ought not to be entirely overlooked. Like Ritschl, he reacted from the ultra-dogmatism of the scrupulously orthodox, without ever going the length of the extreme liberal party, whose great names in England were Stanley, and, more especially, Jowett, as in Germany they were Lipsius and Pfleiderer. And the bitter attacks made upon Ritschl had their counterpart in the misunderstandings and violent opposition to which Robertson was subjected, though the robuster temperament of the German was able to put them on one side in a manner impossible to the more sensitive Englishman. The following quotation taken from one of his sermons (*Life and Letters*, Popular Edition, pp. 278-9) shows that Robertson favoured that method of approach to the person of Christ and His divinity, which is characteristic of the Ritschlian School, and which they derived from Luther. 'How then are we to get back this belief in the Son of God? by authority or by the old way of persecution? The time for these has passed. The other way is to begin at the beginning. Begin as the Bible begins, with Christ, the Son of Man. Begin with Him as God's character revealed under the limitations of humanity. Lay the foundation of a higher faith deeply in a belief of His Humanity. See Him as He was. Breathe His Spirit. After that try to comprehend His Life,' etc. Ritschl and Robertson both belong to the mediating school of theologians, but Robertson is more distinctively on the right wing.

D., page 107.

A pragmatic philosophy which tends to make utility the test of truth is not only peculiarly liable to vulgar debasement, but is, in itself, unsatisfactory owing to an inadequate analysis of the conceptions involved. In pragmatism human needs are made one of the chief determining factors for the acquisition of truth; but not sufficient attention is paid to these needs themselves. We can conclude that the satisfaction of these needs by certain further postulates is legitimate, only if, and so far as, the needs themselves are legitimate, that is, if their place in human nature is of such a kind that

an explanation of the world which makes no response to them, but leaves them entirely on one side, becomes unthinkable. Human needs are of many kinds, and we cannot suppose that all are equally justifiable, and equally merit satisfaction. The danger of a popular pragmatism is lest the aphorism of Protagoras—*μέτρον ἁπάντων ἄνθρωπος*—should be considered its own justification, and no attempt should be made to discover the true relation of man to the universe. For the attempts of the leaders of the school to secure man in a position of freedom and independence, and to make of him more than a puppet, whose every movement is ruled by the cast-iron laws of a mechanical world-order, we must have the utmost sympathy, but, at the same time, we must beware of isolating him, and exaggerating his powers. It is impossible, if a true philosophy is sought, to work directly even from man's moral personalities, without some attempt to understand the meaning and nature of that element in his being. Reischle's work seems to the present writer to be of particular value in this connection.

E., page 129.

The writer's attention has been called to an interesting distinction between the Eastern and the Western Church in this connection. The Nicæno-Constantinopolitan Creed begins with the plural—*πιστεύομεν*; but in the West, the singular—credo—is used, and the Church of England follows the rest of the Western Church. Thus, in the East, the creed is made the confession of the whole Church rather than the personal faith of the individual. It is a question of emphasis, and in view of the position of the Creed in public worship, it appears that the Eastern tradition is the more natural. (The fact is noted in Hahn's *Bücher d. K.*) The present writer is not convinced that the Ritschlians have grasped the necessary distinction between the Church's and the individual's attitude on this point; but for all that, by their conception of faith, they have set us in the road to discover the true distinction. There is a sentence attributed to Newman, which, whether authentic or not, is of interest—'We repeat the creeds, not because we believe them, but in order that we may believe them.' It throws light on the conception of the creeds as standards which the Church holds up to the individual, rather than as expressions of personal faith which she expects her members at once to assimilate.

F., page 216.

While the present writer is not convinced that the discoveries of modern science have made any relation between sin and death unthinkable, it is most desirable that full weight should be given to

those facts which science has established, and that theologians should state their case with more care than is sometimes done. Science has shown that animals lived and died before man, as we know him, dwelt on the earth, and if the doctrine of physical evolution be accepted, the ancestors of man died before moral distinctions had any meaning, that is, before sin reigned. But suppose a world in which moral distinctions are real and vital, such a world, in fact, as our world became, but with this difference that man always chooses right; while we cannot say that death would not have existed, that the natural process apparent in man's ancestors would have been suspended for the benefit of man, yet we do not know that in such a world death would have been the problem and the enemy which it has since been. Sin, without question, obscures the vision of God, and to pass behind the veil from a sinful world must be different from what would have been the case had man in this world ever enjoyed that spirited sight of God which comes from a heart unstained by sin, such as Adam is represented as enjoying before the Fall.

G., page 252.

The negative tendency, apparent in parts of Ritschl and Herrmann, prevents our expecting an adequate apologetic from the School. But they have done useful work in turning the current of apologetic in a truer direction, and placing the emphasis aright. Their influence is observable in writers whose general standpoint is by no means the same. Thus, Mr. Carnegie Simpson, whose *Fact of Christ* has become so well-known, is under considerable obligation to the Ritschlian theologians, especially Herrmann. On page 21 he writes with regard to *The Data of Christianity*: 'It' (Christianity) 'took its rise not in a philosophical school, theological or ethical, not in an ecclesiastical system, nor in a social or political proposal. It took its rise in men being brought face to face with a certain phenomenon—the fact of the person of Jesus Christ. There, indubitably, are the original data of Christianity. Whatever may be said of the building, there is the authentic site.' Dealing with 'The Further Meaning of the Fact,' he shows and acknowledges the influence of Herrmann yet more clearly. 'The Christian man,' he writes (pp. 112-113) 'finds God not beyond Christ, but in Him. In the very human life and person of Jesus we find not only a human life and person that direct us to a higher source of power; we find already there the presence and power of what declares itself to be not less than God Himself. When Jesus deals with us and works within us, He does what only God can do. . . . This is the really Christian meaning of the Divinity of Christ. The dogmatic definition of the symbols are quite secondary to this. There is no reality in your assertion of

the dogma of the Divinity of Jesus unless you mean that for you Jesus is that which only God Himself can be.' We cannot but remember what Herrmann says of finding in God nothing but Christ. Mr. Simpson has greater sympathy with the orthodox expressions of the past than is to be found in the Ritschlian theologians, but his debt to them in the development of his thought cannot be questioned.

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